

55 Ways to Have Fun With Google

A cabinet of search
engine curiosities,
riddles, games, and a
little bit of usefulness

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Philipp Lenssen

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55 Ways to Have fun With Google by Philipp Lenssen.
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On a spring day you can find your way
to a little flower garden where the Googleheads play
You know they're there by the clothes they wear
And their Googlehead faces and their Googlehead hair.

'Cause they're the Googleheads
They shake their doodleheads
They're the goo-ga-goo-ga-goo-gah Googleheads.

– **Laurie Berkner**

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Introduction

This book, in a way, is born out of my daily weblog “Google Blogoscoped” (blog.outer-court.com) and those who read it. Since 2003 I’ve been writing there covering all things Google – not just the fun stuff, but news, discussion, interviews, tutorials, and everything beyond with a relation to search engines. Thanks to those reading along and providing pointers or feedback, I’ve been able to discover more interesting pages and get to know more interesting people around the world than ever before.

When I think of Google, first and foremost I think of its role to discover knowledge, people, and people’s thoughts. Search engines are truly one of the first emergents of a global brain, and in good tradition of Gutenberg’s inventions in the technology of printing, of the invention of the internet, and later the invention of the World Wide Web. All those bring us closer together by speeding up the rhythm in which we communicate.

So there we have it, for the first time in history: search, the key to instant knowledge. And what do we do with it? *Silly things*. OK, not exclusively. But silliness is a part of it. People googlewhack, googlebomb, or egoogle. People create parodies of Google. They create search engine contests. Magic tricks, riddles and art based on Google. They have a lot of fun with Google, and get together to play games on top of Google services. Even Google Inc themselves send out April Fool’s jokes every year, and celebration logos many times a year. Oh, humanity!

But behind many of the playful creations surrounding that giant Google toy, there are serious lessons to be learned. Of the 55 ways to have fun with Google presented here, some ways indeed teach us something; about life, Google, and how to become a better searcher. And the rest of the ways? Well, seriously, they’re really just there to have fun. And I hope you enjoy!

1. Egogoogling: Susan Is...

Have you ever searched for your own name on Google, curious what the world has to say about you? Almost everyone of us did, one time or another. In fact, you should – maybe others search for you all the same, and you want to know what they will find.

The act of searching for yourself is also known as “egogoogling.” Here’s a variant of it which can be a fun game. Enter your first name followed by the word “is” into Google, and put the search in quotes. For example, if your name is Susan, the search would look like this:

“susan is”

Now in the search result snippets, you will learn a lot of things about you that you didn’t even know! For the name “Susan,” we get the following:

Susan is an amazing person to work with!

Susan is an ethical woman and is refusing to cooperate

Susan is a very attractive young lady (with a boyfriend) who for some reason is always late.

Susan is a top Florida residential real estate agent.

Susan is a top producer specializing in the ski resort town of Breckenridge, as well as the surrounding area.

Not only can you apply this approach to find out more about yourself (or just have a good laugh, actually, as the results are likely to be about *another* person), you can also use this to find out about celebrities. To do so, enter the full celebrity name followed by the word “is” into Google, and put it in quotes again:

“arnold schwarzenegger is”

For action movie star Arnie, we get these results:

Arnold Schwarzenegger is a very talented man who would make an excellent governor.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is falling into a similar spiral.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is looking out for voters’ best interests.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is a man more familiar with the red carpets of a movie premiere than a white collar business seminar.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is terrifying as the “killer cyborg” who “looks like Death rendered in steel.”

Arnold Schwarzenegger is The Terminator (T-800).

Arnold Schwarzenegger is quickly discovering that life in politics doesn’t always produce the happy endings so common in many of his Hollywood blockbusters.

Note that you can use “stars in,” “was born in” and similar glue words instead of “is” to find out almost anything about a celebrity. You can even expand the idea to include things, not people... try searching for “Nikon cameras are” and similar queries.

If you don’t have Google near you, here are some popular male and female names with their “egogoogled” results.

Male Names

Aaron is a monotonic anchor.

Adam is a deeply disturbing and depressing film.

Alan is AI’s pattern-matching chatbot.

Albert is so cute!

Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland.

Anthony is probably the best male vocal out there.

Arthur is kind of in a category by itself.

Brandon is for the birds.

Brian is embarrassed that he needs the extra help in school.

Carl is just sitting there in Nashville!

Charles is also a coach of AYSO youth soccer, an officer in the PTA of the local elementary school.

Christopher is of mixed heritage (Asian-American).

Daniel is a natural talent .

David is not allowed computer access.

Dennis is one of Britain’s best known entrepreneurs.

Donald is rarely easy to understand, and people have supposedly heard him say all sorts of risqué things. Donald is a Professor in the Department of Psychology.

Douglas is “King of California.”

Edward is a biological human (not a robot).

Edward is coming BACK to television.

Eric is featured on guitar and mandolin on the songs Viagra and Gypsy woman.

Frank is hilariously funny on what makes us red-staters different from blue-staters (not).

Fred is leading the Franklin Templeton Shootout after 2 rounds!

Gary is the editor and compiler of ResourceShelf.
George is, quite simply, the worst helpdesk technician ever.
Gerald is frightened and doesn't understand why the woman wants to assist him.
Gregory is recognized as one of the very foremost orators.
Harold is an original.
Henry is currently in jail.
Jack is looking for a house with about half an acre of land to buy in California.
James is as forthright as an Old Testament prophet.
Jason is who the JASON Project is named after.
Jeffrey is helping to clear up this cosmic murkiness.
Jeremy is a conscientious worker who can usually be relied upon.
Jerry is a master at understanding your goals for the photograph and then creating the perfect lighting.
Joe is "LIVE" daily.
John is succeeding marvelously in journalism's highest calling: to encourage people .
Jonathan is writing a magical fable of his grandfather's village in Ukraine.
Joseph is the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director.
Joshua is home now.
Juan is similar to the one at the top of this page.
Justin is practicing walking on his hands.
Keith is a true character who comes across as being very sincere.
Kenneth is a strong advocate for community building and social change.
Kevin is creative director and co-founder at Lightroom.
Larry is also a political planner.
Lawrence is a New York Real Estate Broker specializing in Putnam.
Mark is coauthor of Inside Windows 2000, Third Edition (Microsoft Press).
Matthew is believed to have used Mark and the theoretical source.
Michael is abandoning the music business to release his songs online for free instead.
Patrick is one of the nation's best young auto racers.
Paul is backwards in line and taller than everyone else, again.
Peter is a consultant with a distinguished academic track record.
Ralph is not beyond fishing around for a philosophical explanation.
Raymond is an observer-participant anthropologist in the Internet
Richard is often accused of being overly concerned with himself.
Robert is an elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Roger is approached by a gangling, spotty computer scientist.
Ronald is known in more than 100 countries wherever you find McDonald's restaurants.
Ryan is clearly good at her job.
Samuel is irresistible.
Scott is arguably the most well-known and influential unknown composer.
Shawn is now 26 years old, lives in San Diego, enjoys snowboarding, taking trips to Lake.
Stephen is working with Marvel to produce a series of comic books.
Steve is a DJ in Boston.

Steven is writing the same song over and over.

Terry is back with his new group, The Society for Truth and Justice.

Thomas is still searching

Timothy is an accomplished juggler.

Walter is now 79 years of age and in excellent health.

William is truly “fit for a king.”

Female Names

Alice is an AIML engine written in C++.

Amanda is most known for her role in FOX’s hit TV show “The OC.”

Amy is... sniff... sniff... sad about our recent barking on her “Re-name RSS contest.”

Angela is absolutely swamped this week!

Ann is only a writer – and NOT a private detective.

Anna is helping out with the hurricane relief effort.

Anne is a storyteller.

Barbara is to go to Paddle Sports of Santa Barbara.

Betty is distinctively heard singing alongside Michael.

Brenda is the mother of 14 children, 12 of whom are adopted.

Carolyn is currently training for the next WNBA season.

Catherine is a star.

Christina is also busy promoting the line of footwear “Skechers.”

Christine is red and white.

Cindy is in “love with the attention.”

Cynthia is still on the border.

Debbie is an International Magician.

Deborah is pleased to announce two brand-new paintings!

Debra is a nationally recognized expert on communication skills.

Denise is funny, bright and bubbly.

Diana is currently in London, England where she is working on the artwork.

...

Diane is steadfast in her mission of marketing and negotiating the terms of the sale.

Donna is recording her 2nd CD, "Feels Like Home", which will be released in 2001.

Doris is such a great zine.

Dorothy is 5 Dinosaur years old, and is very wise for her age.

Edith is only meaningful.

Elizabeth is just south of the expanding Addo Elephant National Park.

Ellen is Africa’s first lady president.

Emily is nation’s young poet of the year.

Heather is the one with the muscles.

Helen is Coming To Town!.

Irene: Irene is a wedding and portrait photographer serving parts of New England and New York State. Jane is one of Victorian literature’s rebellious heroines.

Janet is fantastic.
Janice is right there on that edge.
Jennifer is a genius.
Jessica is a joy and a delight that brings happiness to all of us.
Josephine is Under Construction!
Judith is no mythical personage.
Judy is going to still have to answer to a higher authority.
Julie is no longer a loner; she, too, learns about being a part of a community.
Karen is an experienced tutor in both fiddle and step dance.
Katherine is one of two large towns you will come across on the route between Darwin and Alice.
Kathleen is foremost a musician.
Kathy is married to Rick Hilton, who is the wealthy grandson.
Kimberly is married to Johnny.
Laura is not a psychologist nor a psychiatrist.
Linda is now going to move to the south of Sweden.
Lisa is furious with Debbie.
Louise is a first-class song, there is no doubting.
Margaret is not the enemy.
Marie is an accomplished author with an important story to tell.
Martha is "free."
Melissa is very open about her past.
Michelle is as Michelle does.
Nancy is also an award-winning video producer.
Nicole is now working hard on a NEW collection of tunes.
Pamela is coming into her glory today.
Rachel is well on her way to achieving her goals.
Rebecca is never seen, and yet she is the main character.
Ruth is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.
Sandra is the fourth woman to win it all, compared to only three men.
Sara is right. Yes, it is true.
Sarah is still in the studio working.
Sharon is expected to decide this weekend.
Sherry is a type of wine originally produced in and around the town of Jerez.
Stephanie is so afraid of germs, she can't stop washing her hands.
Susan is creative, perceptive, intuitive, and timely.
Suzanne is not Sue.
Tina is no acronym.
Virginia is a five-day bike tour.
Wendy is now the only comic featured on the website.



(Original cartoon by the US government.)

2. The Google Snake Game



Here's a party game which needs nothing but a working internet connection (say, a notebook or cell phone), and Google.com's web search. The goal is to create the longest phrase that Google can find by alternately adding one word to the end of the other player's search phrase. Say, the first person starts with "Feelings". Now the second person adds a word, "are", so we get "Feelings are"... (Note the use of quotation marks in the search query.)

Now every time a word is added, the phrase is searched for in Google, and the resulting page count is announced to the group. The one person who creates a sentence with zero results in Google loses and has to do something silly (or if you want to play with points, he loses a point, and the last person who created a sentence with results in Google will win a point). To prevent cheating, the one whose turn is next is not allowed to look at any search result snippet.

Let's take our sample, and see what we get:

Peter: "Feelings" (53,200,000 results in Google)

Mary: "Feelings are" (2,100,000 results)

Jake: "Feelings are nothing" (1,090 results)

Susan: "Feelings are nothing and" (19 results)

Peter: "Feelings are nothing and we" (0 results)

Susan gets 1 point, and Peter gets minus 1 points (or has to do something silly).

If you create too obscure a sentence there won't be any results and you will lose, but if your sentence gets too many results, your opponent will also be able to create a sentence with results. The basic strategy is to try to create sentences so silly that there are only a few results, but not so silly there are no results...

3. Memecodes: Survival of the Fittest Web Pages



Memecodes are web pages with randomly created texts which are born and die over the course of time. How is that possible? By basing those pages on the rules of evolution: the more often a page is found and clicked on in Google – the more popular it is – the more offspring it produces.

The title *Memecodes* is a word play on Richard Dawkins' *memes* from his book "The Selfish Gene"¹. In it, he wrote:

Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.

I created this experiment in early 2004 to watch it grow, with some interesting results. Here's how it worked in detail. First, based upon a dictionary of words, pages with random texts were created. To make sure the texts looked rather natural, words like "the" or "and" as well as punctuation were added. The resulting pages contained Jabberwockyish² paragraphs such as this one:

Cognac? Is sloth is waist is declare of bramble flood in of stoical. Footman... Hesitancy a for attention flabby wanton and calculate vtol cyclamate that paprika feign the aline fourth qualifications of in. Thatch, Saccharin hansom rationale in dine numbers.

This page – or set of "genes" – was unique in the whole set of pages which made up the "ecosystem." Now there was a possibility certain sentences or fragments of sentences made sense. One sentence, for example, contained the phrase "corpulent pigeons," which someone

did indeed search for in Google. As soon as that happened and the searcher clicked on the Memecodes result, this particular page created offspring – it “mated” with the searcher, if you will. The offspring of any page was the same page slightly mutated by randomly replacing some of its words. This way, maybe “corpulent pigeons” became “corpulent pink pigeons” (surely that would have had the chance to be an even more successful gene) or it could turn into “corpulent tower pigeons” (and face certain death over time, because rarely do people search for such a thing!).

How did pages die then? There was a page population limit of a little over 2,000 pages. Whenever a new page was born, the oldest page would be removed (the link from the front-page of the Memecodes experiment pointing to this page would be removed). If a page didn’t manage to create offspring until then, its genes were unsuccessful in surviving and would therefore not be continued.

Other genes (random texts) would be more successful, though. And some of the successful pages would become even more successful in turn, possibly finding a natural search niche to settle into: they lured more and more searchers to find them by creating more and more “natural language.” One day, the pages might even turn into Shakespeare, and it wouldn’t need infinite monkeys to pull it off! Or rather, that was my hope. But evolution takes a lot of time to show results, and after little more than a year, I stopped the experiment. Until then, however, a lot of people found their way onto the site and thus produced offspring. All in all, a wallop 10,022 pages were born (about 2,500 of those seed pages created automatically in the beginning), with some Memecodes in their 5th generation.

Some of the popular sentences were truly strange, like “feel the wrath of salivating mushroom eating frog aliens with microwave ovens,” or the more down-to-earth “seagull sandwich.” Other sentences were circling around the word “torrent,” because “Torrents” had started to become a popular way to download video and other files on the web. The only clearly recognizable pattern in successful genes, however, were exotic words and word combinations I can’t even print here for reasons you might be able to guess: they were all about “adult” topics. Then again, I guess that’s nature!

End Notes

1. Dawkins, R. (1976). *The Selfish Gene*. (www.55fun.com/3.1)

2. *Jabberwocky* is the title of a nonsensical poem from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1872). It starts off with "Twas brillig, and the slithy toves/ Did gyre and gimble in the wabe." (www.55fun.com/3.2)

4. The Google Irritation Game, and the Google Image Quiz



This is probably the weirdest game on Google you will find online. **“Bemmu’s Cure for Google Irritation”** (www.55fun.com/9.1) moves all kinds of Google-related sentences through the screen. Like “I hate Googleplex,” “Who needs Larry,” or “Google doesn’t frighten me.” Now it’s your job to type these sentences into a small box below the screen as fast as you can before they disappear. When you succeed, you get as many points as the phrase contains letters. If you don’t succeed, you lose one of your 10 lives.

If you are looking for a little more long-term fun, I suggest my **Google Image Quiz** (blog.outer-court.com/quiz/). In it, you will be presented with 15 images for every round. Then it’s your job to find the correct search words that were used to find these images in Google Images. Sounds easy? Give it a try, I’ve heard it’s addicting, too!

5. Googling Proverbs

In his book *Was Wir Wissen!* (“what we know”), German author Benjamin von Stuckrad-Barre tried to find the everyday life contexts in which proverbs are used – and he used Google to do so. For example, he searched for “Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones” and then listed *who* was being referred to on the resulting web pages (like discussion boards, or news articles). Let’s follow the same approach for English proverbs here!

Who shouldn’t throw stones in a glass house?

- The plywood industries of Malaysia and Indonesia
- People who say Michael is guilty
- Those who tell on people who don’t follow a site’s Terms of Service
- Russia
- People who call Greeks liars

What conquers all?

- Love
- Labor and perseverance
- Courage
- Truth
- Humor
- Linux

What can’t a man live by alone?

- Bread
- Rice
- Incompetence
- Crimefighting
- Chocolate

- Bagels
- Jaffa Cakes

What's not everything?

- Money
- Winning the prize, or the tournament
- Wikipedia
- Salad
- Ecology
- Speed
- Base salary
- Technological superiority

What best things in life are free?

- Sun Java Studio Enterprise 8.0
- Computers
- The Chicago Cultural Center's top-notch music programming
- Online Black Jack
- Business opportunities
- A smile
- Seattle

Who let the dogs out?

- 49ers
- Karl, Bob, and Paulie
- Rumsfeld
- FOX
- Karl Rove
- Nintendo

What is the new black?

- Lurid pink
- Keylogging
- Green Teat
- Fluffy
- Gray, or fuchsia, or red
- Caucasian
- UNPOP
- Benjamin
- Simplicity
- BeOSmodule
- Scrolling
- Blacker
- Polygamy
- Apathy
- Pacifism
- Downshifting

What shouldn't you throw out with the bathwater?

- Musicians
- The crown
- The pervert
- The BabyCenter.com
- The leak
- The monitor
- The culture
- The dressed up chihuahua
- The concept of rural
- The artistic effort
- The Furbies
- The appraisal

- God
- SOAP
- Pearls
- The fluoride

End Notes

1. Stuckrad-Barre, B.v. (2005). *Was Wir Wissen*. (www.55fun.com/5)

6. Browsing Images of a Site



If you want to see all images of a particular website, you can use the “site:” operator on Google Images (images.google.com) – you may know this operator from Google’s web search. For example, enter *site:cnn.com* into the Google Images search box to see all images shown on CNN’s website. Click on an image in the result list and you’re taken to the respective page containing the image.

This approach is fun if you want to visually explore a site, and you are not interested in any particular content on that site. However, you can still combine the site search with an additional keyword. A search for *site:cnn.com clinton* would therefore show CNN’s images of President Bill Clinton, or images related to him.

Want to try this out on a site a little more fun than CNN? I suggest you enter the following for thousands of riveting photo illusions: *site:worth1000.com*

7. A Brief History of Googlesport

It may be that all games are silly. But then, so are humans.
– Robert Lynd

People today often participate in a challenge called “Search Engine Optimization contests.” In a nut-shell, the goal of these contests is to get to be the top ranked page in the Google search results for a given term or phrase. In order to not disturb “normal” search results, contests often take nonsensical words as their target. While in the beginning I was often taking part in these contests myself, after many lessons learned (including a contest for the nonsense phrase “Seraphim Proudleduck”) today I do not participate in them anymore. But before we jump into the history of search engine *optimization* contests, let’s go back several thousand years and start recapping the history of search engines themselves.

B.C-1956: The Dawn of Computing

Before Christ, there was the counting aid Abacus. Some centuries later, in 1642, Blaise Pascal builds a mechanical calculator. Around 1820, Charles Babbage follows-up with his steam-powered Difference Engine, and Countess of Lovelace Augusta Ada Byron is pondering programming it after having met him.

The first computer (a programmable calculator) by German engineer Konrad Zuse is completed in 1941.

Britain and USA take over the computing technology field with Colossus, ENIAC, the transistor (by Bell Telephone), and UNIVAC – the “Universal Automatic Computer.”

1957-1990: The Internet

In 1957, ARPA (the Advanced Research Projects Agency, within the Department of Defense, DoD) is created to foster US technology. Some ten years later, DARPA marks the beginnings of the Internet. Intel is founded in ‘68, Doug Engelbart spends time show-casing his revolutionary ideas of word processing, and a year later, Xerox creates the equally revolutionary think tank PARC, the Palo Alto Research Center. Universities are slowly being connected together via ARPANET in 1969. In 1977, Apple II is born, followed by the IBM

PC in '81. 1984, the year of cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer*, sees the introduction of the Domain Name System (DNS).

In the late '80s, the number of Internet hosts breaks 100,000, and people are starting to get lost. In 1990, before the days of the World Wide Web, McGill University student Alan Emtage creates FTP indexing search tool Archie. One year later, Mark McCahill introduces the alternative Gopher. Veronica (Archie's girlfriend in the comic books, and the "grandmother of search engines") appears on the scene in 1992, spidering Gopherspace texts, and Jughead arrives in '93.

1990-1993: WWW, and WWW

In the meantime, the World Wide Web, created by Tim Berners-Lee and released by CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) in '91, is starting to take off. And 1993, the year the first web browser Mosaic takes the world by storm, also sees the first acclaimed web robot, Matthew Gray's World Wide Web Wanderer. Martijn Koster announces meta-tag spidering Aliweb in late '93.

1994: Search Engines See the Light

The World Wide Web is becoming the most important internet service. Pizza can be ordered online, and soon Sun will give birth to Java programming technology. (The Java motto was "write once, run everywhere," but frustrated programmers around the world later changed it to "write once, debug everywhere.")

In early 1994, Jerry Yang and David Filo of Stanford University start Yahoo! in an attempt to exert some kind of order on an otherwise anarchic collection of documents. (The word Yahoo is short for "Yet Another Hierarchical Official Oracle," but was pretty much looked up randomly in a dictionary by the two Yahoo founders – the two creators say they liked the name because they considered themselves yahoos.)

Some months later in Washington, Brian Pinkerton's WebCrawler is getting about its work; over at Carnegie Melon, Dr. Michael Maldin creates Lycos (the name comes from the Latin wolf spider).

1995-1997: Dot-Com Rising

More and more search engines appear. There's Metacrawler, Excite (in late 1995), AltaVista (late 1995), Inktomi/ HotBot (mid-1996), Ask Jeeves and GoTo. Yahoo, actually a directory, is the leader, but AltaVista – meaning “a view from above,” and being a wordplay on (Palo) Alto-Vista – launched in 1995 and brought some fierce competition. In 1997 AltaVista was bought by Compaq and we have some right to assume this and a resulting lost focus brought its downfall.

1998-2002: Google et al

It's late 1998. Stanford's Larry Page and Sergey Brin reinvent search ranking technology with their paper “The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine” and start what some time later becomes the most successful search engine in the world: Google (Larry misspells “Googol,” which is a really large number, and Sergey draws the colorful logo on his own using the free GIMP painting software). The uncluttered interface, speed and search result relevancy were cornerstones in winning the tech-savvy people, who were later followed by pretty much everyone looking for something online. Other contenders, like MSN, are left in the dust. In September 1999, Google leaves Beta.

Search engine optimization in the meantime becomes a bigger and bigger business, with experts and amateurs alike trying to boost rankings of websites, more often than not for commercial reasons.

In 2000, Yahoo and Google become partners (Yahoo is using Google's search technology on their own site for a while). In late 2000, Google is handling over 100 million daily search requests.

In 2001, AskJeeves (which dropped the “Jeeves” in the meantime) acquires Teoma, and GoTo is renamed to Overture.

2003-Now: The Dawn of Search Engine Contests

It's hard to tell which search engine contest truly was first. People have been competing to get on top of search results for commercial reasons pretty much since the invention of search engines, and the employed tactics are called “Search Engine Optimization.” But so-called “SEO contests” are created mostly to have fun, and to shed more light on Google's ranking secrets – and potential methods for abusing those

rankings. At times, there were also prizes up for grabs during the contests. Some of those even got handed over to the winner (not all, mind you – it’s a fun sport in a shady environment!).

Today, there are so many different SEO contests going on at any given time it’s hard to keep track of them all. I’ll list some of the first, some of which I participated in myself with the weblog “Google Blogoscoped.”

2004: SERPs

SERPs is short for “Search Engine Result Pages” (completely coincidentally, it also means “State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme”). It was the target keyword for a search engine optimization contest. A group of people, myself included, started the challenge in a search engine discussion group and came up with the term “SERPs” on January 16, 2004. The term was both self-referential, which was fun, and relatively harmless (presumably not a lot of people were searching for it, as there were only 30,700 pages prior to the contest – that may sound much, but it’s only about 1/10th the page count a search for *pink speaker manuals* yields).

I started my own entry as a normal blog post in “Google Blogoscoped,” wanting to see how it would fare in the contest (it was pushed out of the top ten pretty soon). However the leading entry on Google’s blogging community Blogspot was deserted by its owner, Sam, and I was able to open up a site with the same name, thus sitting on his top-ranked page now. Sam’s tactic (which included leaving a lot of links in website guest-books, an approach rightfully deemed spam) made his page the winner on February 16th, 2004.

Kebapgraz

The “Kebapgraz” SEO competition owes its name to “Döner Kebap,” a Turkish dish popular in Germany and Austria, and the Austrian city Graz. Most of the participants of this challenge were from Germany or Austria, using German-language pages. The contest started on June 16, 2004, as a follow-up to a previous challenge for “Haltezeitmessungen.” Linkfarms (a large group of interlinked websites trying to increase their Google PageRank) or other kind of spam were not allowed in this contest. The end date was September 10, 2004, and the amount of web pages containing the word went from 0 to 167,000 later on. A German wiki entry (a wiki usually is a

encyclopedia-style website which everyone can help edit) was inhibiting the top rank for almost all the time, only to be pushed to number two in a 24 hour period starting shortly before the end date.

The contest was started by David Reisner, aged 17, from Austria. “One day I thought, there are some funny contests going on, but there was no Kebap on the web” David said. I asked him for lessons learned, and he answered one should think about the exact competition rules beforehand to avoid some longer fights he’s been through. He added: “In SEO there is a nice tip: give and you will be given, be it advice, links or content.”

Schnitzelmitkartoffelsalat and Gepardenforellen

Yet another German-language Google contest was the hunt for “Schnitzelmitkartoffelsalat” (which translates to *steak with potato salad*). It was started by Steffi Abel on November 15, 2002, in a German discussion group. At that time the word *Schnitzelmitkartoffelsalat* did not return any pages in Google. More than three years later, 22,000 occurrences can be found. According to German webmaster Lars Kasper, who covered the challenge on his website, variations of the *Schnitzelmitkartoffelsalat* challenge included the nonsense words “Telefondesinfizierstudium” (*the study of phone disinfection*) and “Walnichtfischmitkartoffelsalat” (*whale, not fish, with potato salad*).

Some time later, German Googlesport really took off with the creation of the “Hommingberger Gepardenforelle” contest (“Gepardenforelle” translates to “Homminghill leopard trout”). It was launched by Germany’s biggest IT magazines (on- and offline) and the two keywords today return almost 3 million web pages.

Mangeur de Cigogne

And then, there was a French Googlesport contest for the phrase “Mangeur de Cigogne.” Launched by Promo-Web, the games began in March 2004, and were to be ended in June 15 2004. This might have been one of the weirdest and most obsessive of all search engine optimization contests. And naturally, because most content was French, you couldn’t understand a word of what happened unless you were fluid in this language.

So what does “Mangeur de Cigogne” mean? It literally translates to “eaters of stork.” But, according to Jerome Chesnot from the south of

France, “It means nothing really. This string was chosen to not pollute Google results.”

Jerome held the 1st place in this competition for the 15 last days, but then came in second. He told me *Mangeur de Cigogne* was “really a good experience ... in terms of HTML optimization and other technical things.”

Nigritude Ultramarine

“Nigritude Ultramarine” was arguably the biggest SEO contest that ever took place. It received enormous coverage including articles on Wired.com and tech site Slashdot. The competition was started by SEO company DarkBlue (hence the name “Nigritude Ultramarine,” which is another way to say “dark blue”).

Blogger Anil Dash nearly won the top rank in the first round ending June 7, 2004 with a blog entry (the second round prize, a 17” LCD flat screen, went to the aggressive contenders of a web discussion forum). Anil’s post was linked from various other high-profile blogs who wanted to push a friend up the Google rankings. Anil wanted to prove that good old content – as opposed to sleazy optimization tactics – is king, and he was successful in doing so.

As I’m writing this, there are around 215,000 web pages containing the phrase “Nigritude Ultramarine.” Anil Dash is still number one.

A Short Guide to SEO

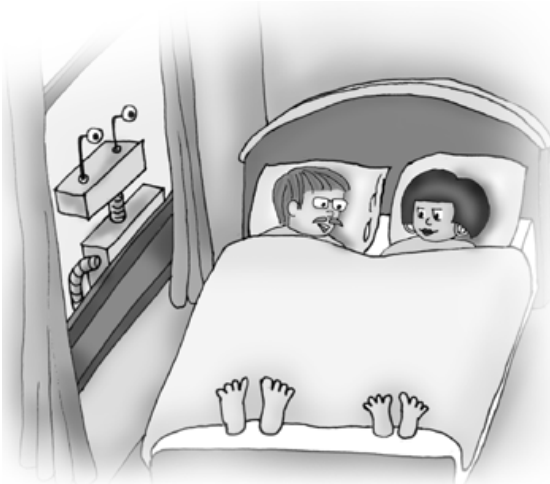
So how do you win these search engine optimization contests in the first place? This depends on the search engine, but for Google, heavy “on-page” optimization is futile in a competitive environment, and all depends on “off-page” optimization.

To explain, “on-page” optimization means you create a page which repeats the target keywords in a variety of places, in the meta keywords, in the title, in page headings and so on. What you do on your page might have an effect on the human reader – which is indeed important – but it’s of little value to the Googlebot and the way Google ranks your site. For competitive keywords, all that Google is interested in is this: *how many important pages link to your page using the target keywords as link text?*

If you can get a lot of valuable “backlinks” from authoritative web pages (say, a mainstream news site, or a #1 blog for an industry), then a high ranking will come naturally. So, the real key is to get good backlinks (ideally links containing the target keywords). Not necessarily 1000s of them; it’s of more value to get a dozen high-value backlinks, then a million low-value backlinks. For example, Google pretty much ignores it when you create 100,000 backlinks from your website A which point to your website B (and creating such a huge amount of links is not too hard with the help of server-side programming). Google understands that such “close-knit” networks aren’t showing natural authority – they might easily be faked by so-called spam farms... and spamming is one thing Google in their rankings try to avoid.

Now how do you get all those links from others? Here, we need to forget about technical optimization for a second. What’s important now is to have great web page content, and to make it be known to the right people – not by mass-mailing everyone and their dog, but by submitting your link to blogs on the subject, emailing the right people, pitching your story to mainstream news sites, or sharing it in newsgroups or web forums relevant to your site. Outside of an SEO competition, that means you need to understand a community, be part of it, and help others. People won’t link to boring and perhaps over-optimized pages, but people will link to pages that help them (or make them laugh). They link to a tutorial, a good read, a funny video, a cartoon, or an interesting photo. Within the scope of an SEO competition, it’s also likely that people simply link to a friend. If you’re actively participating in making the web a better place for all (content is king!), you’ll also be getting your share of “link love.”

8. What is Google, and what do people consider fun about it?



*Miki, don't move. Everything is going to be OK.
There is just nowhere to hide from Google any more.*

(Image courtesy of Elnyn Jenkins. © 2003 Verity Intellectual Properties Pty Ltd.)

Google is more than just the search engine. Even though that alone wouldn't be too bad, either, because it allows us to quickly receive answers from the web to almost any question asked. Today while I'm writing this book, Google consists of dozens of services (google.com/sitemap.html). Some you may have heard of, like Gmail, or Google Maps. Others are more obscure, like Google Base, Google Page Creator, Google Writely or Google X, and even Google experts can have a hard time keeping track.

To understand what people know of Google – and what they think is fun about it – I asked my sister Judith about the different services. Afterwards, I asked UK programmer and Google expert Tony Ruscoe (ruscoe.net/blog/) about these services. Both were urged to take a guess in case they were clueless about the answer. Well, who's right then? I won't judge, but instead will let you read their answers now!

Asking a Google Novice

Judith, what is Google Talk?

Judith: I believe that's a text to speech program to read out things for you.

What is Google Earth?

Judith: I know that one! You can view the whole globe from above. You can zoom close into every country.

What is Picasa?

Judith: That's a fun drawing program to create Picasso-like paintings.

What is Gmail?

Judith: That's an email client.

What are the Google Labs?

Judith: That's a place to propose interesting ideas for Google to add to their products. The suggestions are filtered by Google engineers and finally, they will be implemented.

What is Google Maps?

Judith: I don't have a clue.

What is Google Scholar?

Judith: Google for students, without any adult websites.

What is Google Video?

Judith: That's a search engine, similar to an image search, but for videos instead.

What is Google Images?

Judith: The same like a search engine for words, but with images.

What is Google Answers?

Judith: That's a place where you can ask questions for other people to answer. If the answer is right, those who answered will get money.

What is Google Catalogs?

Judith: You can see pages taken from catalogs, for example when you enter "teddy bear," you will see catalog pages containing teddy bears.

What is Froogle?

Judith: That could be a parody site acting just like Google... no matter what you enter, all you get are results containing images of frogs.

What are Google Alerts?

Judith: That's when Google sees you are searching for illegal material online and you click on one of the result pages. This can have legal consequences.

What is Google Blogger?

Judith: That's a weblog community run by Google.

What is Google Desktop?

Judith: That's like Microsoft Windows but made by Google. E.g. it contains a word processor.

What are Google Groups?

Judith: Those are chat rooms on any conceivable topic. You can login to talk.

What is Google X?

Judith: I have no idea! Well, I suppose it's a kind of Google-related riddle or puzzle game.

What do you think is fun about Google?

Judith: Searching for people. That's nothing particularly special or uncommon, but it satisfies your curiosity about someone you want to know more about.

Asking a Google Expert

Tony, what is Picasa?

Tony: It's a photo management/ organization application. You can download a program that allows you to manipulate your images.

What is Google Talk?

Tony: It's an IM – Instant Messenger – application that allows online conversations and VoIP, Voice over IP.

What is Google Earth?

Tony: It's fantastic! I've told my friends that it's arguably the best thing to appear on the Internet this year! Seriously though, it's a program that allows you view the earth from space. You can zoom in and view certain areas really close up.

What is Google Labs?

Tony: In my view, Google Labs isn't really a service as such. It's simply a name they give to many new releases that don't quite make it to Beta. It

often consists of smaller projects that some of the Google Employees create in their 20% time.

What is Google Local?

Tony: It's pretty much like an online service directory, like the Yellow Pages. In fact, Google Local UK uses Yell.com for its results, I think. It's recently been integrated with Google Maps so that it's easier to see where the businesses are located.

What is Google Scholar?

Tony: It's an online search that searches educational papers and theses, things like that.

What is Google Video?

Tony: It's a video search that searches for videos that have been uploaded by the public or by a number of different associations who have agreed to let their content be available for free. I think it only searches the description or transcript that's been provided by the user.

What is Google Answers?

Tony: Google Answers is an "ask the expert" service where you can submit a question, name your price and, hopefully, get an answer from an expert in the field.

What is Froogle?

Tony: It's an online price comparison service to help you with your online shopping.

What are Google Alerts?

Tony: Basically, Google will send you an email whenever something new appears in the Google web results or Google News.

What is Google Desktop?

Tony: Google Desktop started off as a desktop application – Google Desktop Search – that enabled you to search your PC for information. I think it's turned into something much bigger now, where you can add your own bits to it. I've never used it.

What are Google Groups?

Tony: Google Groups encapsulates Usenet groups as well as Usenet-style groups that have been created by Google Account owners. They are basically discussion forums/ mailing-lists.

What was Google X?

Tony: I think it was a service similar to the existing home page that used a Mac OS X style interface. It appeared in Google Labs but then

disappeared. Presumably because of legal reasons... but we don't know. I never saw it, but I've seen some copies of it.

What is Google Base?

Tony: Good question. It seems to be everything! It's an online repository where people can upload practically any data that has a structure. It can be used for storing things like recipes, people profiles and classified ads. So you can advertise anything you might have for sale – although there's no way to take payment via Google Base at the moment. In short, it's an online database application.

What is Google Analytics?

Tony: It's a web stats analysis application. You place some JavaScript in your website which then collects data from your visitors using cookies. Google Analytics takes all this data and analyzes it, creating graphs and reports about your visitors' trends.

What is Google Sets?

Tony: It's in Google Labs. I looked at it a long time ago so I've forgotten exactly what it does! I think it's a service that lets you provide several items – up to five, I think – and Google will suggest some more items that are in the same group.

What do you think is fun about Google?

There are a lot of things that make Google fun. It can be used to settle the most basic of arguments. We often use it in the office when we don't believe what someone is saying. We run the risk of being fooled by the "If it appears on Google, it's true!" rule!

Their services are always interesting. Waiting for a new service can be exciting. It gets people talking...

Very often, the services aren't ground-breaking – but the way Google present them is. Take Gmail and Google Maps. These types of services had been around for years, yet all of a sudden you could just sit and play with Google Maps for hours!

9. How Much Time Google Saves Us



We might forget how much fun a search engine is, and how much time it saves us in doing everyday things, until the internet connection is interrupted and we're left without Google. (Or, and this happens more rarely, when Google itself is down.) But usually after some minutes, things are back to normal – and we got our extended memory, our library of more books we could ever read, our information center, and our universal answer machine. And now, for just a moment, I would like you to imagine what today's life would be *without* all that. What life would be without Google... and how much more time we'd be spending on solving our problems.

Finding Your Lost Keys

With Google: You enter “How to find lost keys” into Google, and the pages you find suggest to search every place again. *Time spent: 10 minutes.*

Without Google: You search your rooms. You start to get angry, then desperate. You search for a second time, and find your keys. *Time spent: 10 minutes.*

Time saved using Google: none.

Opening a Coconut

With Google: You search for “How to open a coconut.” A video tutorial explains you should hold a coconut over a bowl, and use the blunt side of a cleaver to whack the coconut until it cracks open in two halves. *Time spent: 5 minutes.*

Without Google: You ask your neighbor, and she tells you she doesn’t know either, but invites you to check her cookbooks collection. On that day, you fall in love with her, and she with you. You discover the solution to the coconut problem in her books the next morning. *Time spent: 1 day.*

Time saved using Google: around 1 day, but love life suffers.

Checking If Tonight’s Date Is Trustworthy

With Google: You enter “Frank Simmonz” into Google. His criminal records turn up, and you stay away from him. *Time spent: 5 minutes.*

Without Google: You meet Frank Simmonz. He seems to be a nice guy, not poor either, and he’s elegantly dressed. You meet him again at a restaurant a week later. Another week after that, you notice Frank has blood on his shirt but you try to not mention it. Later, while you two watch a mafia movie together, Frank says, “People in that business talk differently, and I should know!” You leave the cinema in a hurry. *Time spent: 2 weeks.*

Time saved using Google: 1 week, 6 days, 23 hours, and 55 minutes.

Creating a Revolutionary Method of Transportation

With Google: You enter “how to speed up transportation” into Google and stumble upon a tutorial on wheels construction. *Time spent: 1 minute.*

Without Google: You go out and watch nature. You also analyze people, and animals, trying to figure out how and why they move. You make sketches, you observe, and you remain patient. You dabble with rocks, wood, and water. You teach your children about what you learned during your lifetime, sparking their curiosity. After that, your children take over the task you began and try finding a revolutionary

method of transportation. And their children, too. The idea spreads to neighbors, friends and family, and it spans generations.

Then, a whole culture becomes infested with the problem, and everyone everywhere is trying to crack their head solving it. Many, many years later, the wheel is invented. *Time spent: 12,600 years.*

Time saved using Google: Around 12,600 years, give or take a minute.

10. Google Cookin' a Lemon Chicken

Tara Calishain is the author of an online search journal called *ResearchBuz*, and she's also the co-author of the fun book "Google Hacks." On her website, she shows off a tool (www.55fun.com/10) that helps you cooking with Google. That's right – all you need to do is enter a couple of ingredients, and you will get fitting recipes. Tara told me she's not a very good cook and uses this tool to explore new ways to combine the contents of her fridge.

Let's try this by entering *chicken lemon*, and hitting the "Grab a recipe" button. You will now be referred to a Google result page with different pages containing recipes. The actual search query that is being used is the following:

chicken lemon (inurl:allrecipes.com | inurl:epicurious | inurl:recipessource | site:cooking.com | inurl:Recipezuar)

To explain, the "inurl" operator means that only pages which have this text in their web address appear in the result, like "AllRecipes.com." The "|" operator means "or" (either the ingredients will be on *AllRecipes.com*, or they will be found on *Cooking.com*, or ...). The words "chicken" and "lemon" must be included, because by default Google uses the "and" operator.

So what do we get to cook then with these two ingredients? Quite a lot actually, as nearly 2 million recipes have been found! I'll pick the first one, "Roast Chicken With Lemon and Thyme." This is the full ingredients list, and you can see it indeed contains chicken and lemon:

- 3 tablespoons minced fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 1 7-pound roasting chicken
- 1 lemon, quartered
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup (about) canned low-salt chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons all purpose flour

11. Douglas Adams and the Google Calculator

The Google calculator is included in Google.com's normal web search. So instead of entering words you want to find in web pages, you can simply enter math queries like the following:

$10 + 7 * 3 - 12$

The Google result will then display the solution: "10 + (7 * 3) - 12 = 19." That's already a little more fun than using a normal calculator (and incredibly helpful too, at times), but there's much more to it. Let's start with an Easter Egg – a hidden function within a program that makes it do something unexpected and interesting – and enter the following:

answer to life, the universe and everything

Entering this will result in the Google calculator showing you the answer "42." This is a reference to a mythical number from Douglas Adams' sci-fi opera "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy." I won't spoil its meaning here, but instead suggest you simply read this great book (or, watch the movie). This isn't the only connection between Google and Douglas Adams, by the way. Completely coincidentally, the word "Googleplex" – the name the Google employees gave their California headquarters – appeared in the *Hitchhiker's Guide*:

"And are you not," said Fook leaning anxiously forward, "a greater analyst than the Googleplex Star Thinker in the Seventh Galaxy of Light and Ingenuity which can calculate the trajectory of every single dust particle throughout a five-week Dangrabad Beta sand blizzard?"

The calculator fun doesn't stop there. The following are just some more examples of what's possible, and often these different queries can be combined to larger formulas:

seconds in a year (result: 31,556,926 seconds)

15 USD in EUR (12.74 Euro)

*120 pounds * 2000 feet in Calories* (77.77 kilocalories)

furlongs per fortnight (0.000166309524 m / s)

speed of light in knots (582,749,918 knots)

12. Oops, I Googled Again

--, --- --- --, .-.. .

Brian Mingus and a bunch of his friends were sitting together one evening, and after a few glasses of Italian wine, decided to write up a giant list of catch-phrases, movie titles, proverbs and random quotes... which all had to include the word “Google.” Here’s the list¹... can you guess all the sources?

How many Googles must a man walk down?
Googlemorgen America
Thus quoth the raven, “Google more!”
Wherefore art thou, Google
Google and prejudice
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I Googled weak and weary
I am a Googlevangelist
Googles up, hang ten!
Google is the dictator that everyone loves
You can’t spell God without Google
Stairway to Google
Dude, where’s my Google?
Got Google?
We are all Googlers under Google
In the beginning, there was Google
I Google, therefore I am
It was the best of Googles, it was the worst of Googles
All my kingdom for a Googler
Peace, Love, and Google
All you need is Google
Google like it’s 1999
The Google at the end of the rainbow
We’ve found a witch! Can we Google her?
The Googler on the roof
One flew over the Googlenest
Why can’t the English teach their children how to Google
We are the knights who say Google
Google spoke Zarathustra
That’s why the Google is a tramp
Murder she Googled
Save the last Google for me
There’s not enough Google in this town for the both of us
I’ll Google you on the flip-side
The Scarlett Google
The Purloined Google
“Googligans Island”
All my Googles

The Googlebury Tales
Google and the Beast
A Midsummer Nights' Google
20,000 Googles Under the Sea
Something Googled this way comes
Google to the death!
You smell like a Google...and you look like one too
I dream of Google
Google it again Sam
Uncle Google wants you!
To Google Times
Out of the Google and into the fire!
Don't throw the Google out with the bathwater
Bad Brian, you must say 20 hail Googles!
Bless those who Google you
Google, the final frontier
Google, interrupted
Gone with the Google
I can't get no Googlefaction
Saturday night Google
DONOTTHINKABOUTAPINKGOOGLE
You Google my name, and you know whereever I am.
Jack, I'm Googling!
I'm Gooooogling in the rain
Google outside the box
Beyond Google and evil
Do you know where your Google is?
Dr. Strangelove, or how I learned to stop worrying and love the Google
Murder by Google
To Google or not to Google.
To sleep, perchance to Google!
My name is Google, you killed my father.
It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Google!
And they Googled happily ever after
Do you promise to love, honor, and Google, until death do you part?
The lone Googler
Big Google is watching you
Google the man!
The first rule of Google is not to talk about Google
Gone with the Google
Frankly my dear, I don't give a Google!
Googleblanca
Love in the time of Google
War and Google
Googleonia
The west side Google
Larry, Moe, and Google
Give me Google or give me death!
Four Googles and 20 years ago
Googletrek, the next generation
Googlescene investigation
Red, white, and Google
Google Potter
How many Googles does it take to turn into a lightbulb?

55 Ways to Have Fun With Google

I was lost, but now am Googled
Not a creature was Googling, not even a mouse
Do the Googlewoogy
And I took the road less Googled, and that has made all the difference
The Googler's Guide to the Galaxy
So long, and thanks for all the Google
Google No. 5
Return of the Google
Do the hokey pokey, and Google all around
Abandon all hope, all ye who Google here
A Google in the Dark
The Google that roared
Google on the Oriental Express
Googlecalifragilisticexpialidocious
You can't have your Google and eat it to
If I was the last man on earth, would you Google me?
Saved by the Google
Hand over the Google and nobody gets hurt
Google is my co-pilot
Sometimes a Google is just a Google
Do not meddle in the affairs of Googlers
Goooogle, taste the rainbow
Have you hugged your Google today?
Wake up and smell the Google
Here's a quarter; Google someone who cares
No shirt, no Google, no service
I know its only Google but I like it
If it feels good Google it
Advanced whitening Google
Keep your Googles to yourself
I think I Googled my pants
Put a Google on your face
The Googlepride Googleparade
USS Google, departing
Googlers of the world unite
Stop Googling your nose
Never underestimate the power of Google
Your Google is so soft!
Friends don't let friends Google drunk
Do you have a designated Googler?
Is that a Google in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?
The restaurant order slips these are written on are Googlebilias
All roads lead to Google
One Google, two Geegles
The Googlelogical Argument
Girls giggle and boys Google
Frankly my dear, I don't give a Google.

End Notes

1. Courtesy of Brian Mingus and friends. (2004). *What would Jesus Google?* (www.55fun.com/12)

13. The Disappearing Google Logo, a Magic Trick



Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.
– Arthur C. Clarke

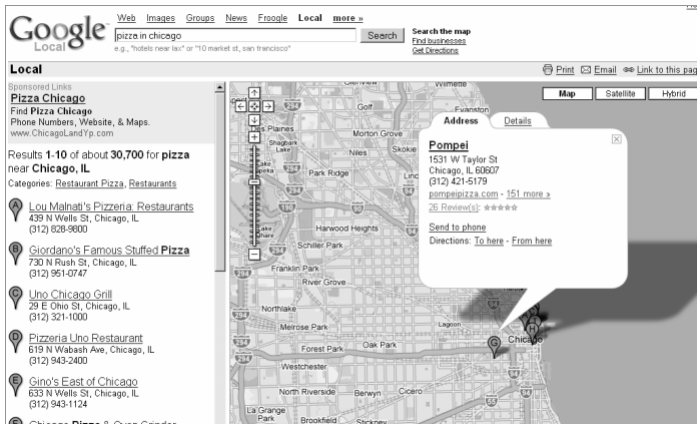
Here's a magic trick to surprise your friends with. What they will see is this: you are at the Google homepage, and you casually ask someone to watch the Google logo. Then, you move two of your fingers to completely cover the "o"s in the Google logo. When you remove your fingers, to much surprise, the letters "o" will be missing from the logo. Now you ask your friend to move her fingers over the missing "o"s. After your friend removes the fingers, the logo will be complete again!

The trick here? It's not really the Google homepage you and your friend are looking at – it's a fake page (darkartsmedia.com/Google.html). And when you click on the page, the letters of the logo will disappear after five seconds. Clicking again will make them reappear after five more seconds. So when you move your fingers to cover the Google logo, simply click anywhere on the page, and wait a bit before you remove your fingers... and when your friend covers the letters, you click again. (A third click, by the way, will change the page to an actual Google homepage so you can perform searches to "prove" the page is real.)

14. Fun With Google Maps, the Wiki Way

This chapter is a special one, because it wasn't written by me. In fact, it wasn't written by any single person... instead, I created a wiki (a website anyone can edit) and allowed for people to write this chapter. The topic was “Fun With Google Maps” and the result is the group-authored text that follows!

Google Maps



Google introduced Google Maps in February 2005 to let users “view maps, get driving directions, and search for local businesses and services.” Instead of doing a multitude of things, Google Maps did only one thing (but it did that one good): show you a near full-screen map of the US – and later, other parts of the world – allowing you to drag and drop the map (or search) to get to any location. Search for *pizza in chicago*, and a couple of red pins mark the location. Clicking on a pin reveals an info box with more details on what you can find at this location.

Worldwide reach

Google Maps was originally different then Google Local, but they later merged together.

When it first launched, Google Maps was limited to just the USA, but other countries have been added to the fold, with the street level mapping of the UK and Japan being uppermost.

...and I give you the Earth!

Increasingly, even the worldwide coverage of Google Maps is insufficient for some people. Google also offers a standalone program, Google Earth, which takes the experience to an even higher level.

By offering satellite and other aerial imagery as its basis (rather than the pre-drawn maps of Google Maps), Google Earth has a far greater wow factor when simply browsing the world. It does however offer vector mapping as an overlay to the images, and allows for new data to be added to the mix via an XML data-format called KML. Innovative sites are making use of this to offer downloads of the data into Google Earth.

Mashups galore

Ever wanted to find out where your taxi is in New York city, or what the desert looks like from space? Anyone with a website, and a little programming knowledge can create their own layer on top of Google Maps. A genius move by Google, bring people in to use your maps, without having to front any programming costs. The continuous development depends on the public, just like this page.

In late June 2005, Google released its now famous API (application programming interface). It has probably become one of the most popular ones out there. Hundreds of websites are dedicated to creating “mashups,” which mix Google Maps, through its API, with other kinds of data to create websites that are sometimes informative, sometimes entertaining, sometimes ridiculous, and always interesting.

One mashup, called Housing Maps (www.housingmaps.com), takes rental listings from the popular classifieds site Craigslist and adds it to Google Maps, taking a boring but useful text-based website and letting you browse it through Google’s easier-to-navigate map technology. Rather browsing and clicking Craigslist’s list of links, you just zoom in on a neighborhood, see where the houses are, and pick one. You can limit results by price, number of rooms, whether they accept dogs or cats, and even see pictures of the place via a simple pop-up.

The site's creator, software engineer Paul Rademacher, launched the site before Google formally announced its API, but the search giant was so impressed with his work that it soon hired him away from Dreamworks.

There are more mashups, such as Mapulator (www.mapulator.com). This tool allows you to traceroute by IP address or host name to see the path the packets take. You can run the trace from their server or from your PC. It's pretty slick, and has some settings you can tweak for doing the traceroute. It can also do "whois" queries when you click on one of the hops (to find out that hop's IP). And if you just want to know where any particular computer/server/IP is you can also type in the IP or host name in their ping tool and find out if the host is up, where it is, and get the "whois" record.

CHICAGOCRIME.ORG AV 4200 N A freely browsable database of crimes reported in Chicago.

Browse by: Crime type · Street · Date · Police district · ZIP code · Ward · Location · Route · City map Search: **GO**

Homicide / First degree murder

Latest reported crimes

MARCH 14	HM232296	6:50 p.m.	400 block E. 51st St. Sidewalk
MARCH 14	HM232477	7:38 a.m.	5400 block S. Princeton Ave. Residence
MARCH 14	HM231046	6:50 a.m.	6800 block S. Campbell Ave. Alley
MARCH 11	HM227044	8:58 p.m.	2000 block W. 70th Pl. Residence
MARCH 11	HM225635	5:17 a.m.	12500 block S. Edbrooke Ave. Alley
MARCH 11	HM225498	2:28 a.m.	2100 block S. Wood St. Street
MARCH 11	HM225452	1:58 a.m.	700 block N. Noble St. Alley
MARCH 10	HM225324	11:51 p.m.	9200 block S. Blackstone Ave. Street
MARCH 10	HM225094	9:48 p.m.	5300 block W. Ohio St. Sidewalk
MARCH 9	HM222349	2:30 p.m.	6100 block S. Cottage Grove Ave. Sidewalk

Map **Satellite** **Hybrid**

Crime classifications key

● Person - 19 crimes ● Person (domestic) - 1 crime

And then, if you're the paranoid type, there's Adrian Holovaty's brilliant Chicago crime map mashup at ChicagoCrime.org. It's a "freely browsable database of crimes reported in Chicago," as the site claims. You can select the type of crime you want to locate (like "armed violence" or "assault"), as well as the date range it happened, and when you click "update map," a few dozen colored pins will appear. Clicking on any pin reveals the details of the crime which was reported happening in just that location.

And then, there was a Google Maps game of Risk. A clever idea, but unfortunately game maker Hasbro didn't think it was so great and sent its creator a cease and desist. But the games don't end there. Another creative programmer by the name of Thomas Scott has created a multi-player cooperative game called Tripods (thomasscott.net/tripods/) in

which users join together to protect Manhattan from the invading Tripods.

You can use the New York On Tap bar and subway map (newyorkontap.com/Subways.asp) to find great hotspots in the City That Never Sleeps, and then, since you'll be in no condition to drive, the map also shows you the nearest subway station.

If you're looking for a date, you can consult Hot or Not's database (hotmaps.frozenbear.com) and see the pictures of people who are hot (or not) in your area... all put onto Google Maps.

Are you a runner? Or do you want to know how long your hike was the other day? You can use the Gmaps Pedometer (gmap-pedometer.com) to digitally retrace your steps, and there's even the option to send a permalink of your route to somebody else.

And saving you from a potentially embarrassing situation, there's Urinal.net (urinal.net/google_map.html), which will help you find a place to do your business anywhere in the United States.

Goocam World Map (butterfat.net/goocam/) is a Google map of unprotected/open camera streams obtained from Google searches, mostly from Europe and US.

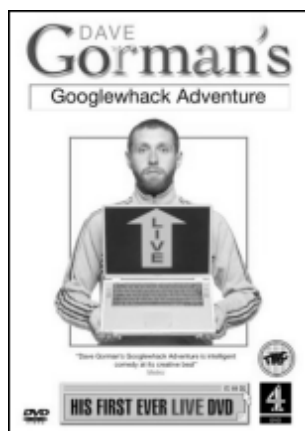
A more whimsical application is Santa Stars (www.santastars.com) which plots Christmas Light displays worldwide and allows Internet surfers to vote/comment on them.

Authors: Grimmthething, Nathan Weinberg, Omid Aladini, Mark Berry, Ryan Singel, AC Zimi, Kyle K., Ionut Alex. Chitu, Aaron Wall and Esben Fjord.



A Pac-man crop-circle spotted on Google Maps!

15. Dave Gorman's Googlewhack



Dave Gorman is a comedian who goes to great lengths to get material for his show and books – in fact, he would probably go to *any length* to get material. And that includes traveling around the world meeting complete strangers because of a truly wacky (and fun) idea. But let's start at the beginning, with a seemingly innocent email Dave received.

Dave, 31, and possibly in an early mid-life crisis, wanted to write a novel. I guess it wasn't real writer's block that kept him from doing so: it was his computer. Dave in his show tells of a truly life-changing incident:

“Jake [the publisher] lied to me. Jake said it's just you, your imagination, and your computer. That's *not* strictly speaking true! My computer is attached to the internet. The internet contains *everything in the whole wide world ever*. I don't know about you, but I find *everything in the whole wide world ever* to be a bit distracting! I would sit there at the computer thinking... Right, here we go, Chapter one! Aahhhh.... just as soon as I've checked my email!”

Dave continues to tell that he receives more emails than he could ever read – not just from friends, family and colleagues, but complete strangers as well. One of these emails in particular captured his attention. The email contained very little, and even less that Dave *understood*. All it read was:

G'day Dave,

Did you know you're a Googlewhack?

Steve

No, as a matter of fact, Dave *didn't* know! But a little explanation is necessary in case you never heard of the word "googlewhack." In a nut-shell, a Googlewhack happens whenever you enter two words into Google and you receive *exactly one result*. A Google result containing not two, nor a thousand, and not zero, but exactly a single web page. Now there are some more rules to it – your words must be contained in a dictionary, and the result pages themselves may not be dictionaries – but that's about it. And in case you never tried, scoring a Googlewhack is not as simple as it sounds (there are websites dedicated to nothing else but googlewhacking, and listing those who found a Googlewhack first [www.googlewhack.com]).

So when Dave was informed that he himself in fact was a "Googlewhack," he was stunned. The explanation, as he later got to understand, was that one of Dave's own web pages contained those two words someone else had entered to score a Googlewhack. Of all the pages in the whole wide world! What might be even more improbable: when Dave met with googlewhacking stranger Steve a while later in London, Steve ended up trying to find a new googlewhack on Dave's computer, and found one on a page *owned by a friend of Dave* who lived in France. Dave says this struck him as an incredibly fascinating coincidence, "since there are three billion sites on Google, and I don't have three billion friends."¹

And then, Dave caught the Googlewhack fever. Several googlewhacks and a crazy bet with his friend from France later, Dave went on a mission around the world to hunt googlewhack page owner after page owner. How that works? Simple: Dave considered himself to be a person who was found by a perfect stranger via a Googlewhack. Now he wanted to know if he could continue finding others via a Googlewhack all the same, and he aimed to do so in 10 successions before his next birthday. He would look up the contact address contained on a web page at which he found a Googlewhack, and would then travel trying to meet this person (via airplane, taxi, train or whatever mode of transportation it would take). He would then ask this person to try out to score a Googlewhack herself, and if that

would be successful, he would continue traveling to the person found on that new Googlewhack page.

While the *concept* of Dave's Googlewhack adventure may sound simple, executing it wasn't. First of all, not every page Dave found contained a contact address. Also, not everyone wanted to meet him, or googlewhack for him. And there was a good chance that person, even though willing to help out, *wasn't able* to find another Googlewhack. All in all, as Dave puts it, "Googlewhacking has taken me around the world. Three times. I've played table tennis with a nine year old boy in Boston, and I've been way too familiar with some snakes in LA. I've met mini-drivers in North Wales and hippies in Memphis."² Now I won't spoil the ending, so if you want to find out if Dave was successful or if he lost this bet with his French friend, take a look at the book or fun DVD of the live show (www.55fun.com/15.1). In the meantime, you might want to try finding a Googlewhack yourself... or send Dave another email. Who knows what might happen?

End Notes

1. Barratt, A. World wide whack. (2004). (www.55fun.com/15.3)
2. Googlewhack Adventure homepage. (davegorman.com/googlewhack.htm)

16. Google Q&A

Google Q&A is a fun answer feature built directly into the Google.com web search. It answers certain questions right above the search result, so there's no need for you to visit a web page – the answers themselves are extracted from web pages.

You haven't seen this before? Give it a try by entering the following:

Albert Einstein birthday

Above the web page results there will now be a box reading:

Albert Einstein – Date of Birth: 14 March 1879

This works with a whole lot of search queries. You can even enter *Who is Clark Kent ...* and have Google reveal to you “Clark Kent is the civilian secret identity of the fictional character Superman.” All of the following yield direct Questions & Answers results (note the answers are not always correct!):

Population of Germany

President of USA

President of France

Birthday of George Bush

Birthday of Albert Einstein

What is the birthday of Albert Einstein?

Who was President of the USA in 1996?

When did Isaac Asimov die?

Isaac Asimov date of birth

Isaac Asimov birthday

What is the birthplace of Bono?

Bono birth place

Who is Prime Minister of England?

Where is the Eiffel tower

Where is the Statue of Liberty

When was Star Wars released?

Who is the Queen of the United Kingdom?

Who wrote the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Catch-22 author

Permuted Sentences

Before Google's Q&A feature, a fun way to find instant facts was to move around the words of a question sentence until you hit on an answer. To explain, let's say your question is "When was Albert Einstein born?" We remove the first word, "when". We'll now do a search for the several possible rearrangements of the words, and check the Google page count for each:

- "Albert was Einstein born" (0 results)
- "born was Albert Einstein" (0 results)
- **"Albert Einstein was born" (17,500 results)**
- "Albert was born Einstein" (5 results)

... and so on.

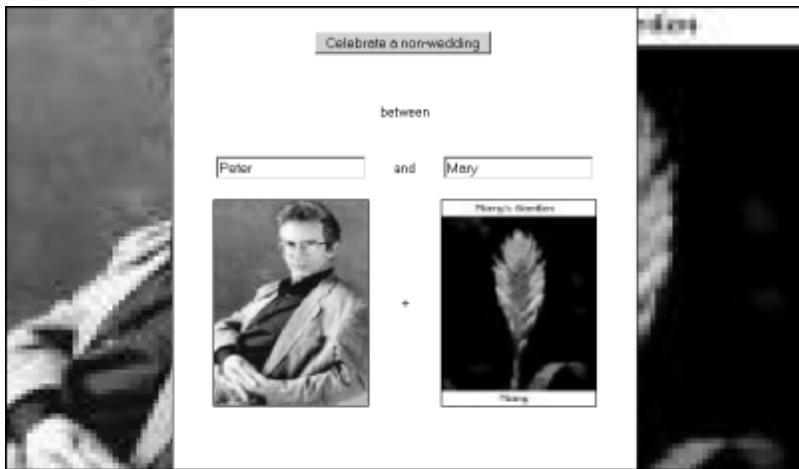
The one phrase search of these returning the most results is our "fact finder." In this case it would almost certainly be "Albert Einstein was born", and the continuation of this sentence contains our answer. This can be automated, but takes a while as going through all permutations requires many Google searches. FindForward's "Ask Question" search (findforward.com/?t=answer) returns the following answer (you can see there are some left-overs from the snippet which aren't meaningful in this context):

1879, Albert Einstein was born on March 14, 1879
German born American physicist who developed the
special and general theories of relativity.

17. Celebrate Google Non-Weddings, and More

Christophe Bruno is surely having fun with Google, in his own ways. He's an artist, and many of his projects are based on the internet – and Google. In 2002 he released the “Google AdWords Happening” onto the world. AdWords are Google's small advertisement boxes displayed next to search results.... and Christophe used (or abused) them to show nonsensical messages like “mary !!!/ I love you/ come back/ john.”

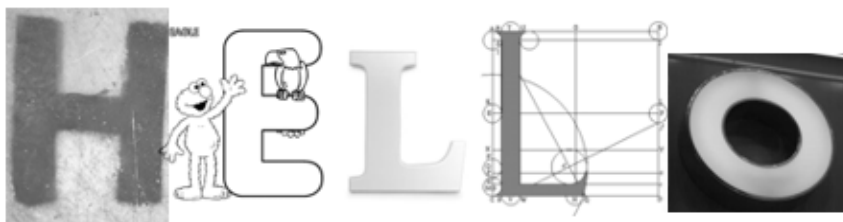
Also in 2002, Christophe created the *Non-Wedding page* (unbehagen.com/non-weddings/). Don't expect to necessarily understand its purpose – it's art. You can enter any two names into its two boxes, like “Peter” and “Mary,” and click “Celebrate a non-wedding” on the top of the page. What happens then? Well, based on the names you entered, Christophe will simply load two different images via Google Images. Like here:



Spelling Words With Google Images Letters

This isn't the only way to combine Google images in interesting ways. You can also try to create a word by searching for its letters. For example, when you want to spell “Hello,” you search for “letter h”, “letter

e”, and so on (including quotes), and always take the first image which displays the respective letter. If a letter is repeated, you choose the second image. Here’s the result for spelling “Hello” with Google image results:



Create a Google Rebus

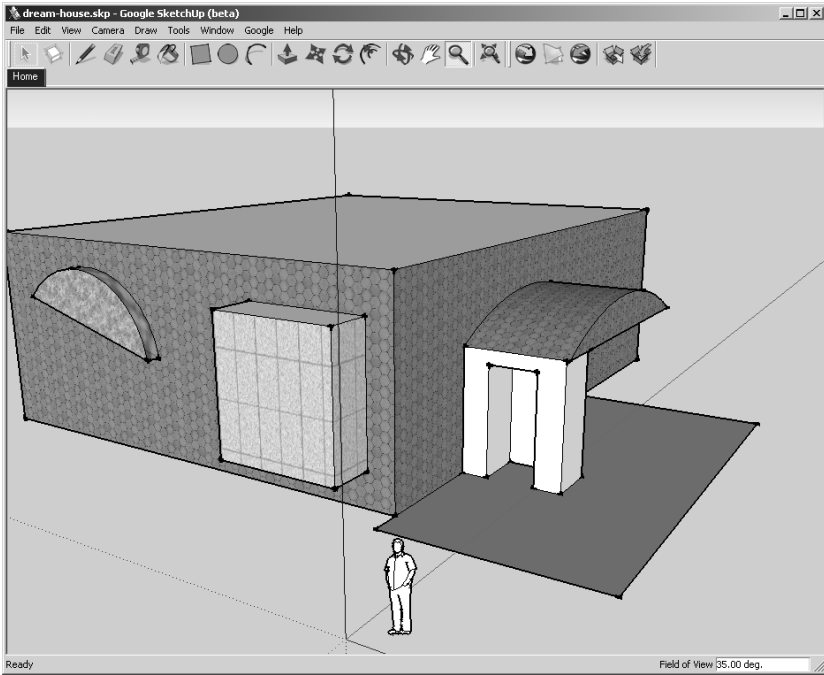
Instead of spelling words by their letters, you can also “spell” words by their individual parts. This makes for a good riddle to present to someone. For example, when you want to spell “lovesick” you search for “love” and “sick” and put the two result images next to each other; your friend then should guess what the word means.

Other words for this “Google Rebus” game include: “walkman,” “stronghold,” or “happiness.” (Search for “happy” and “ness” – the first part will result in a happily laughing baby, the second in the monster from Loch Ness!)

The Google Images Storyteller

Want to turn complete paragraphs into visuals? You can, with the Google Images Storyteller (blog.outer-court.com/story/). You type a sentence – a poem, or song lyrics, or anything else – into the input box, hit submit, and it will automatically search Google Images to create a story made up of visuals only.

18. Design Your SketchUp Dream House



Google SketchUp is a 3D tool for creating architecture and other 3D models. Architects like it to prototype buildings, but the software is so easy to use that anyone can have fun with it. After you download SketchUp (sketchup.google.com) and follow through a hands-on tutorial (which might take you as little as 15-30 minutes) you are ready to go and design your own house. And why not make it your dream house?

Now this part of the book will live online: Send the SketchUp file of your finished dream house to philipp.lenssen@gmail.com, include your name, location, and a small description of your house and your creation will appear on www.55fun.com/house/

19. Kevin Bacon and the Google Network

You probably heard of the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon game. The objective is to find a way to get from any actor to Kevin Bacon in six steps or less. For example, Sean Connery has a Bacon number of 2 (Sean Connery was in *Wrong Is Right* with Myron Natwick, who was in *Cavedweller* with Kevin Bacon). That's possible because Kevin Bacon stars in a whole lot of movies. But is he really the center of Hollywood?

I tried to find out if Kevin Bacon's network is indeed as dense as the Six Degrees game suggests. And of course, I used Google for that. Here's what I did, and you can try the same; I picked a list of 50 random famous actors, including Kevin Bacon, and searched Google trying to find out if any two of the actors on the list were in a movie together. Of course, this isn't statistical correct proof. But it's fun. Here's an example of a search query:

"Sean Connery and Julia Roberts" OR "Julia Roberts and Sean Connery" -degrees

This will return all pages with either the first or second phrase in them. (I exclude pages with the word "degrees" because I don't want to hit on pages where people played the Six Degrees game, as that would give Kevin Bacon an unfair advantage.) Whenever over 500 results have been found, I will count this as a "hit."

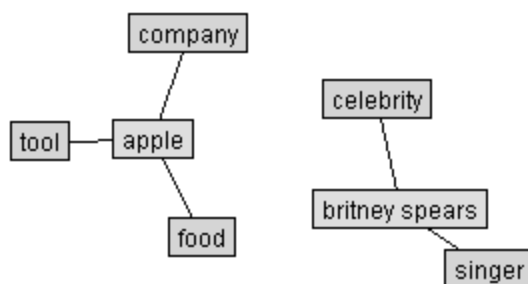
The following map shows all hits combined into a social network¹. Some actors of the 50 I included in the game actually didn't make the list because they had no connection at all – like Humphrey Bogart.



What does the map show? For one thing, that Kevin Bacon is not the center of the Hollywood universe – at least not using this (non-representative) sample. Instead, Julia Roberts, Johnny Depp and Tom Cruise seem to be the most connected. On the other hand, you can also see that it’s easy for almost everyone on the list to get to Kevin Bacon in six steps or less.

A Network of Everything

How well does this approach of visualizing a network fare with something other than actors? We can also use it to find connections between any two things. For example, we can create a network of connections between things and their categories. To create the following image, I used the words *Britney Spears*, *apple*, *horse*, *speakers*, *piano*, *violin*, *carrot*, and *orange*. As categories I used *food*, *actor*, *movie*, *book*, *song*, *album*, *company*, *band*, *tool* and a few more. I applied a threshold of 50 Google results to count something as connection, and I used glue phrases like “is a”, “are an” and so on:



You can see Britney Spears is a celebrity singer. “Apple” is an ambiguous term, meaning both the company, and the fruit.

End Notes

1. The visuals are created using Sun’s GraphLayout tool.

20. The Google Alphabet

Can you guess the top Google search result for the letters of the alphabet? For example, when you search for “a”, the top Google result is Apple Computer Inc (naturally, the top result changes over time). Simply note down the first company, organization, software, person or product you can think of below:

A: Apple Computer Inc

B: _____

C: _____

D: _____

E: _____

F: _____

G: _____

H: _____

I: _____

J: _____

K: _____

L: _____

M: _____

N: _____

O: _____

P: _____

Q: _____

R: _____

S: _____

T: _____

U: _____

V: _____

X: _____

Y: _____

Z: _____

Solution

Apple Computer Inc, **B***Tselem, **C**-SPAN, **D**-Link, **E**! Online, **F**-Secure, **G**mail, **H**-Net, iTools, Jennifer Lopez, **K** Desktop Environment, Council of Europe portal, Texas A&**M** University, SBC Knowledge Network Explorer, **O***Reilly Media, **P**FLAG.org, **Q**4music.com, The **R** Project for Statistical Computing, McDonald’s, **T**-Mobile, whatUseek Web Search, **V**-Day, President George **W**. Bush, **X**.Org, **Y**ahoo! Messenger, **Z** Communications. (*This is from 2005 – results often change.*)

21. Google Search Tips



How do you have more fun when searching? Simply: become a better searcher. Here are some syntax basics as well as advanced tricks or bits of trivia for searching with Google.com:

A quote/ phrase search can be written with both quotations “*like this*” as well as a minus (or dot) in-between words, *like-this*.

Google didn’t always understand certain special characters like “#”, but now it does; a search for *C#*, for example, yields meaningful results. Note that not every character works yet.

Google allows 32 words within the search query (some years ago, only up to 10 were used, and Google ignored subsequent words). You rarely will need so many words in a single query – *just thinking of such a long query is a hard thing to do, as this sentence with twenty words shows*. However, it can come in handy for advanced or automated searching.

You can find synonyms of words. E.g. when you search for *house* but you want to find “home” too, search for *~house*. To get to know which synonyms the Google database stores for individual words, simply use the minus operator to exclude synonym after synonym. Like this: *~house -house -home -housing -floor*

Google has a lesser known “numrange” operator which can be helpful. Using e.g. *2000..2006* (that’s two dots in-between two numbers) will find 2000, 2001, 2002 and so on until 2006.

Google's "define" operator allows you to look up word definitions. For example, *define:nasa* yields "National Aeronautics and Space Administration" along with many more explanations. You can also enter *what is nasa* for similar results.

Google searches for all of your words, whether or not you write a "+" before them. Therefore, writing queries *+like +this* is not really necessary.

Sometimes, Google seems to understand "natural language" queries and shows you so-called "onebox" results. This happens for example when you enter *goog, weather new york, ny, war of the worlds* (for this one, movie times, movie ratings and other information will show), or *beatles* (which yields an instant discography).

Not all Googles are the same! Depending on your country, Google might forward you to a different version of Google with potentially different results to the same query. For example in Germany and France, certain results are censored for a long time now. In early 2006, Google decided to self-censor Chinese search results (such as web pages of human rights organizations) in compliance with Chinese government requests – which not only resulted in an oddly skewed Google.cn, but also a public outcry from both diehard fans and organizations such as Reporters Without Borders.

For some search queries, Google uses its own search result advertisement system to offer jobs. Try entering *work at google* and sometimes, you find job offers straight from Google.

Some say that whoever turns up first for the search query *president of the internet* is, well, the President of the internet. Take a look at the results for this search to find out who's currently ruling you!

Can you guess why the Disney homepage is in a top 10 search result position when you enter "Exit", "No", or "Leave" into Google? Try it out, you'll be surprised (I won't spoil here why this is happening, but it has something to do with adult websites).

Google doesn't have "stop words" anymore. Stop words traditionally are words like "the", "or" and similar which search engines tended to ignore. Nowadays, Google includes all of your words, even the former stop words.

You can use the wildcard character "*" in phrases. This is helpful for finding song texts – let's say you forgot a word or two, but you remember the gist, as in *"love you twice as much * oh love * *."* You can

even use the wildcard character without searching for anything specific at all, as in this search: `"*****"`

The following search tip, on the other hand, you better not follow. But you may sing along...

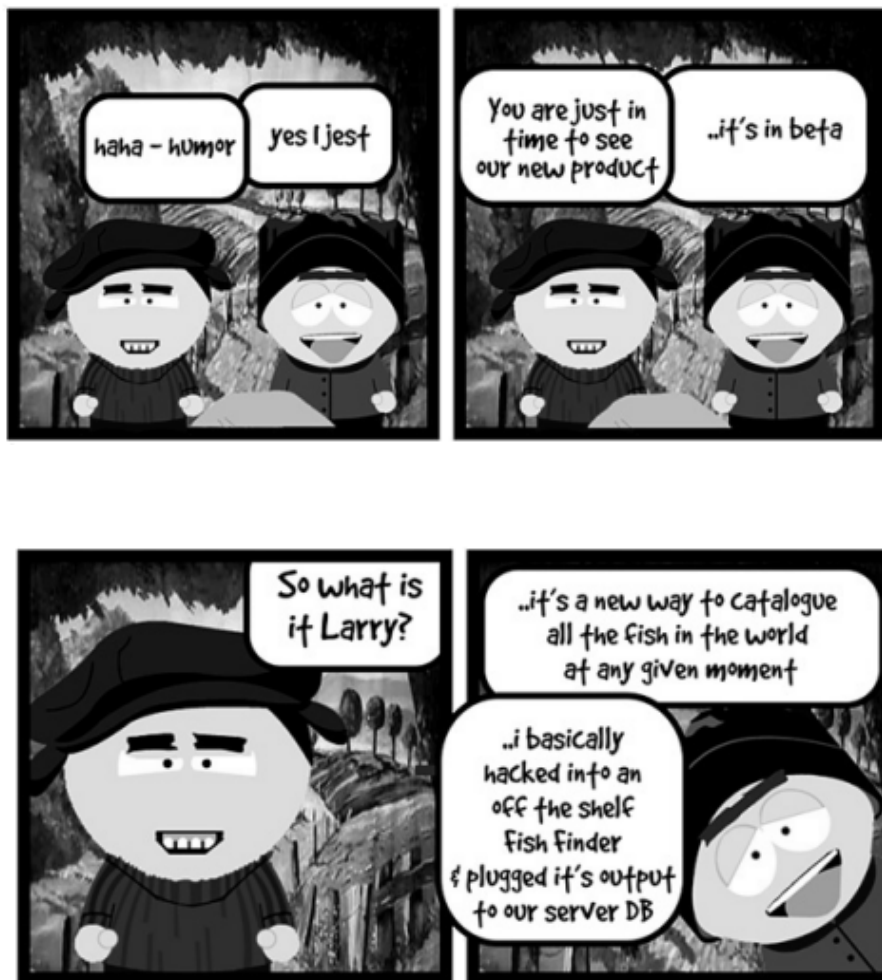
*When it's late at night
And you've an essay due
And you don't know what to write
I'll tell you what to do
Before sunrise
Find something to plagiarize*

*on Google
Talkin' 'bout Google.."
— Mort, The Google Song*

22. Googlepark

Following is *Googlepark: Scoble goes to Google* (www.55fun.com/22) courtesy of Jamie Grant (Robert Scoble is a Microsoft employee with a popular blog).









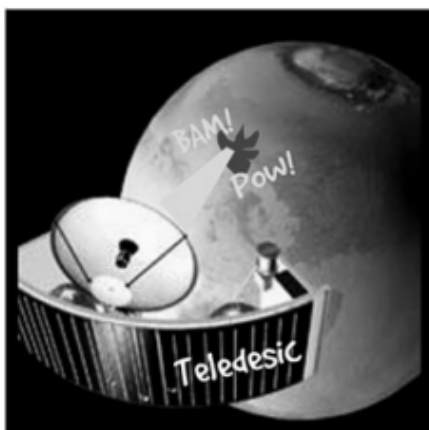












23. Googleshare

Googleshare (also called mindshare) is one of the most powerful approaches to have fun with mining the web for data, and answers. Here's how it works; when you enter a single term or phrase into Google, you get a certain page count. For example, you enter "*Rolling Stones*" as phrase search and Google tells you there are about 10,500,000 pages on the web containing this phrase. Now you combine this query with one of the Rolling Stones singers, searching for: "*Rolling Stones*" "*Mick Jagger*"

This results in 1,470,000 pages. The percentage the second value has in relation to the first is its "googleshare." So Mick Jagger has a googleshare of 14% with the Rolling Stones. This is very high; Keith Richards only has a Rolling Stones googleshare of 5%. This makes Mick Jagger the most popular in the band. Peter Smith, on the other hand, has a googleshare of only 0.006% with the Stones – because he's not a band member, of course.

Here are some more googleshare examples:

Full House:

Ashley Olsen	1.46%
John Stamos	1.07%
Bob Saget	1.04%
Mary-Kate Olsen	0.97%
Dave Coulier	0.58%
Jodie Sweetin	0.56%

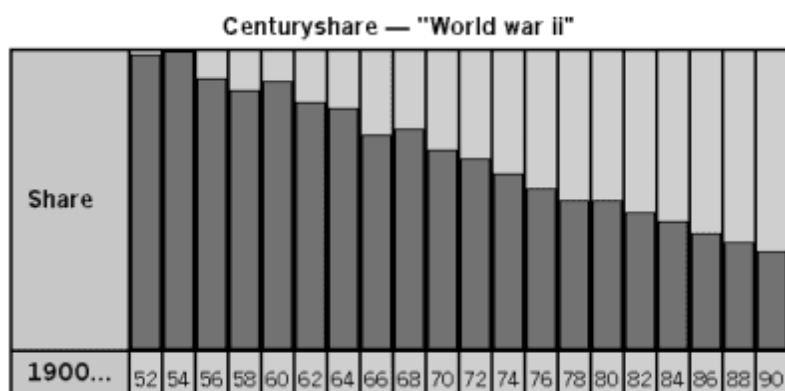
Tom Cruise:

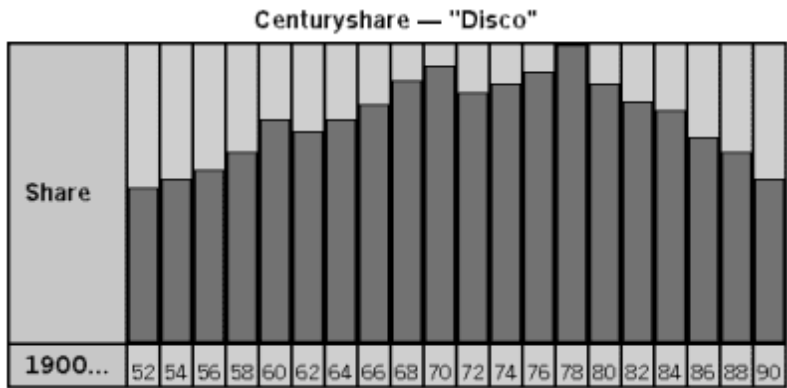
Nicole Kidman	20.80%
Katie Holmes	16.34%
Penelope Cruz	7.51%
Mimi Rogers	0.57%

Harrison Ford:

Star Wars	14.97%
Firewall	8.98%
Blade Runner	4.06%
Raiders of the Lost Ark	2.78%
The Fugitive	2.12%
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade	1.43%
American Graffiti	1.13%
Six Days Seven Nights	0.9%
Regarding Henry	0.55%
The Mosquito Coast	0.5%

We can also find the googleshare for a specific year and an event. For example, we can determine the googleshare for 1950 and “Disco,” 1951 and “Disco,” and so on for all years until 2005. We then normalize this data by taking into account that some years are represented more often on the web (for example, the year 1960 on its own appears more often than the year 1961). What we get as result is a peak year which shows us when this fad or person was on the height of its fame, or when an event happened. I’ve created a tool called “Centuryshare” as part of the FindForward search engine (findforward.com/?t=century) which helps visualize this data:





As you can see, you can determine the googleshare for anything and everything, really. Douwe Osinga, who currently works at Google Zürich, created a project called “Land Geist” (see www.55fun.com/23.2 – back then Douwe actually used search engine AllTheWeb, not Google, to compile his data). Land Geist features different maps for different words, like “holiday,” “rice” or “poverty.” The most popular countries for holidays according to Land Geist are Mauritius, Cyprus and Spain. Determining the “countryshare” for “Islam,” on the other hand, returns Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran as top contenders.



The “countryshare” map for the term “holiday” (the darker the country, the higher its googleshare). Courtesy of Douwe Osinga.

24. The Shortest Google Search (and the One Returning the Most Results)

Can you find the **shortest Google search** that *doesn't* return any results, using only the letters a-z (no Umlaute or accented characters) and the numbers 0-9? How many letters will you need? For example, you can enter “d8” into Google. It’s only two letters, so it’s very short. But whoops – it returns nearly 5 million pages! Or search for “njd2we9e2.” That returns no results... but it’s also 9 letters long. Can you make a short search with no pages at all found on the web?

Answer: _____

Page count: _____

Also, can you find the **Google search returning the most results**? You are allowed to use any character at all (not only letters from a-z and numbers). Let’s say you search for *Beatles*. More than 16 million results. Not bad already. Or search for *USA*. That’ll be over 1 billion result pages, as Google tells you. That’s better, but you can go even higher than that. Which single search query finds the most result pages?

Answer: _____

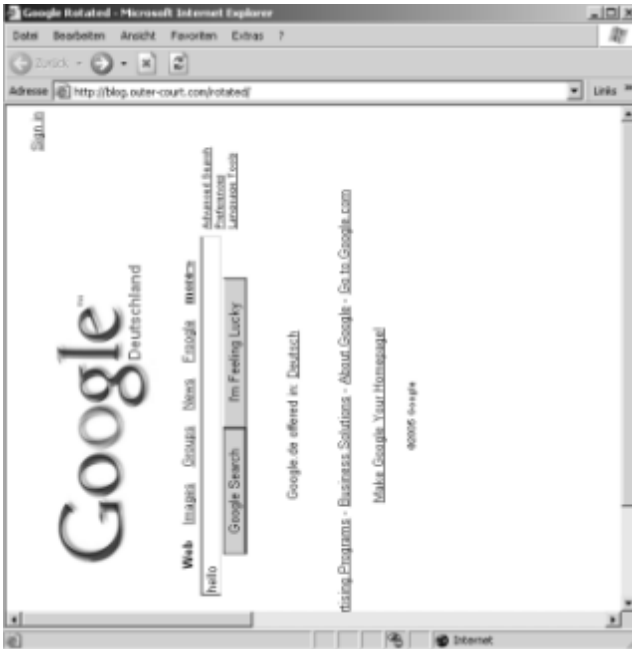
Page count: _____

25. Google Rotated and Mini Google

*“Mini Me, if I ever lost you I don’t know what I would do. (pauses)
I would probably move on, get another clone but there would be a 15
minute period there where I would just be inconsolable.”*
– Dr. Evil, *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*

Both of the following fun ways to browse Google need the Internet Explorer browser, so feel free to skip this chapter if you’re using Firefox or any browser other than Internet Explorer.

Google Rotated (blog.outter-court.com/rotated/) shows you the normal, actual Google (with all of its functionalities)... except that everything’s rotated 180°. Including the Google homepage, the search results, and even the web pages you click on in the results. When people visit Google Rotated they’re usually either trying to adjust their monitor, or bend their neck leftwards.



Google Rotated... it’s another way to look at search.

Mini Google (blog.outter-court.com/mini.html), on the other hand, doesn't make you bend your neck. Then again, it may make you move your face really, really close to the screen... 'cause it's tiny. About the size of your thumbnail. Good luck searching for something with Mini Google, and good luck hitting on a search result page – as a bonus, if you managed to do that the page you clicked on will be mini too!



Google Mini. Small, but fun!

26. The Google Quiz: How Much Do You Know About Google?

Are you a Google expert? Do you know everything about the company and its services? Or are you still new to the topic, and you only used their search engine for a couple of times so far? Well, you can put your knowledge to the test in this quiz which will answer the question: How much do you know about Google? Get a pencil and cross the single right answer for every question, and calculate your score afterwards.

1. Google Inc. was founded in ...

- a) 1996
- b) 1998
- c) 2000

2. Google Inc. was founded by ...

- a) Sergey Page and Larry Brin
- b) Eric Schmidt and Larry Page
- c) Larry Page and Sergey Brin

3. Which search operator does Google enable by default?

- a) The AND operator
- b) The OR operator
- c) The NOT operator

4. Google once used Yahoo's search result to feed its engine. True?

- a) Yes, from 1998-2000.
- b) No, it was the other way round – Yahoo used Google once.
- c) No, Google and Yahoo never had any search relationship.

5. Google Analytics is a service to ...

- a) Check if your web pages validate
- b) Check how many people visit your web pages
- c) Check your Google PageRank

6. In 2006, Eric Schmidt is Google's ...

- a) Vice President Engineering
- b) Eric left the company in 2004 to pursue his hobbies
- c) Chief Executive Officer

7. What was the name of the search engine the Google founders developed before Google?

- a) PageRanker
- b) BackRub
- c) Gogol

8. What is the algorithm behind Google's PageRank?

- a) The more pages link to you (and the higher their PageRank), the higher your page's PageRank
- b) You get 1 PageRank point for every web page you own
- c) The algorithm behind PageRank is kept secret, similar to the Coca-Cola formula

9. Why do some sites get "banned" from the Google index?

- a) They tried methods to get their pages ranked better which Google considers spam
- b) They have content which is illegal in this state/ country
- c) Both a) and b) are true.

10. At which university did the Google founders meet?

- a) Oxford University
- b) MIT
- c) Stanford University

11. What is the "Googleplex"?

- a) It's where Google employees work
- b) It's a solar system which shares only the name with Google.com
- c) It's the server farm Google built up to deliver search results to you

12. Which words are printed on the Froogle homepage?

- a) Search for any product you want (or discover new ones).
- b) froo gle (fru'gal) n. Smart shopping through Google.
- c) Froogle. Just shopping.

13. Around how many hits do you get for the word “Hello” (in 2006)?

- a) 420,000 pages
- b) 420,000,000 pages
- c) 42,000,000,000 pages

14. If you want to find a place to grab a pizza, you go to ...

- a) Google Food
- b) Google Places
- c) Google Local

15. At the Association of National Advertisers annual conference in October 2005, who said Google will take 300 years to fulfill its mission to index the world’s data?

- a) Eric Schmidt
- b) Larry Page
- c) Marissa Mayer

16. What colors do the letters of the Google logo have, from left to right?

- a) Red – Blue – Green – Yellow – Green
- b) Blue – Red – Yellow – Blue – Green – Red
- c) Blue – Yellow – Purple – Yellow – Red – Blue

How well did you do?

Calculate your points by adding 10 points for each question you answered like the following: 1 - b, 2 - c, 3 - a, 4 - b, 5 - b, 6 - c, 7 - b, 8 - a, 9 - c, 10 - c, 11 - a, 12 - a, 13 - b, 14 - c, 15 - a, 16 - b.

0–50 points: Though you have a mild interest in Google, you’re new to the topic. Maybe you prefer other search engines, or you’re not using the web for a lot of tasks. You have yet to learn how to become a power searcher, but you’re on your way.

60–110 points: You already understand more than just the basics of how Google works. Using your search power, you can locate almost anything you want. You are likely making good use of Gmail, Google News, and other Google services.

120–160 points: Consider yourself a Google guru. In fact, with your knowledge you could write a book like this. Chances are you are reading a lot of news

articles on Google, and you know the ins and outs of its services. You probably use Google on a daily basis for many years now.

27. Recreate Google From Memory

Before you flip to the next pages, try something: take pen and paper, and recreate Google from memory. Try to sketch every link and other detail from the Google homepage just as you remember it. When you're done, take a look at what some other people created faced with the same task – and then finally take a look at the actual Google homepage!

Which parts of the Google homepage did you get right, and which did you get wrong – and can you imagine why?



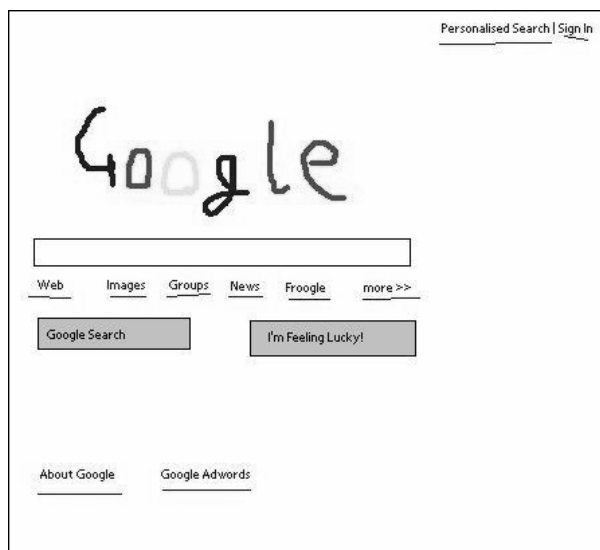
By *Jordan Hamer*



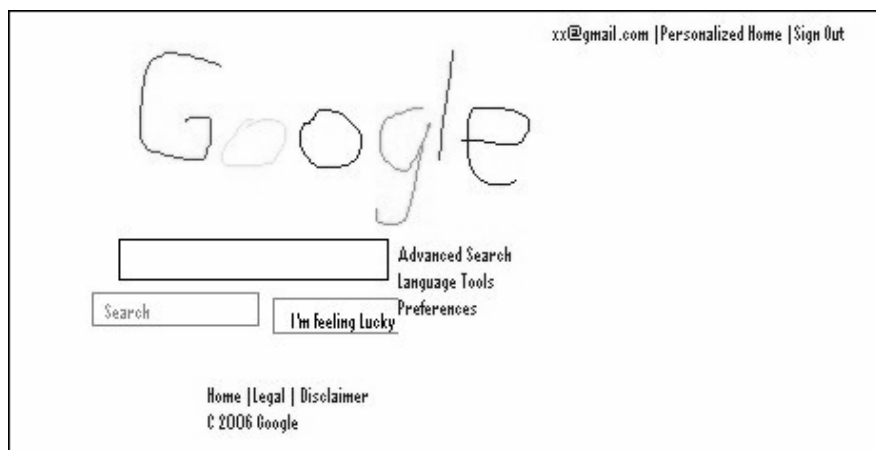
By *Jack Hynes*



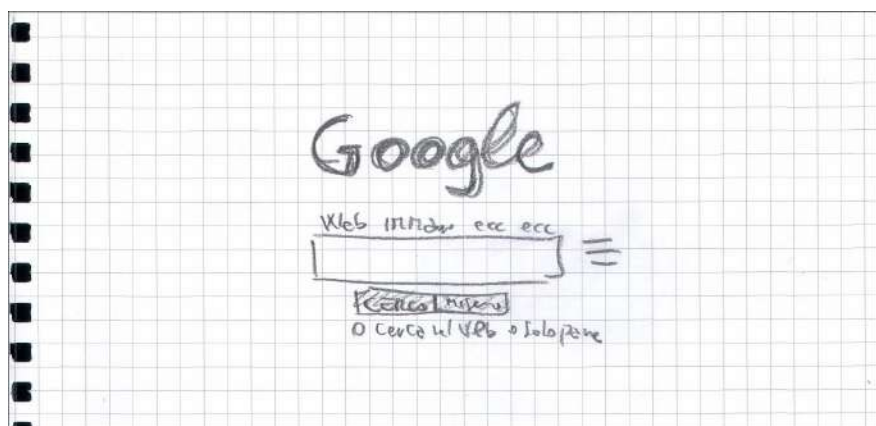
By ¥€\$... I got a feeling the artist wasn't motivated!



By Splasbo



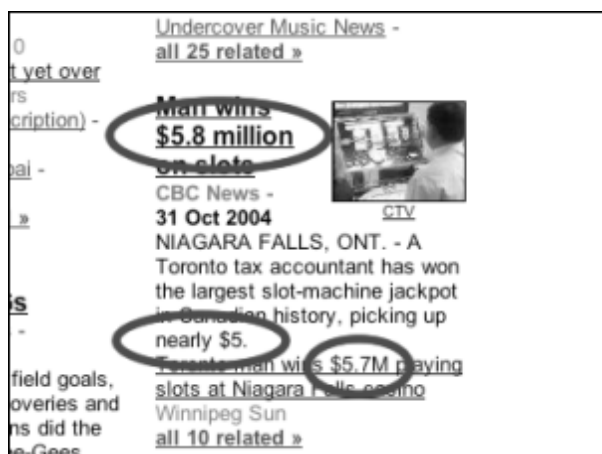
By Joe



By Luka

28. The Strange World of Google News

Google News is Google's automated news polling machine. It will display whatever it thinks is important today based on what other news sources write. The fact that it's automated may make it more objective (even though the included sites are still picked manually, and in the case of China, the local government has a word to say in it too), but at times, the Google machines get it wrong. They put the false image next to a news story, or the snippet doesn't fit with the headline – or the story's a hoax, like when Google News in November 2003 announced that Google Inc had been bought by food giant Nestlé (“Nestlé says Google will be renamed NesGoogle and have a recipe section added to its main page”). I've collected some of the examples of the past here – it's good the Google computers don't have human feelings, because they sure would feel guilty now.



The snippet¹ says a Toronto tax accountant won the largest slot-machine jackpot in Canadian history – \$5!

Exorcist resurrected at US box office

Guardian - 2 hours ago

Exorcist: The Beginning scared its way to the top of the American box office this weekend, surprising industry observers by taking a better than expected \$18.

[Exorcist Bedevils Alien's Box Office](#) People Magazine (subscription)

[Newest 'Exorcist' riddled with problems](#) Bangor Daily News

[Screendaily.com \(subscription\)](#) - [Rediff](#) - [The Malaysia Star](#) - [BBC News](#) - [all 298 related »](#)

The Exorcist prequel from 2004 made \$18 on the opening weekend.² That's even better than winning a \$5 lottery jackpot!

Clarín - Notimex - Antena 3 TV - El Adelanto (Salamanca) -

La verdad sobre Arnold Suarseneguer

IBI News - hace 1 hora

El artículo del periodista Greg Patast, como el publicado a clarividente que uno ha de pensar en la campaña de las eléctricas españolas... Es tan fuerte, que estoy pensando (Lo digo en serio).

[California elige hoy gobernador, entre dudas sobre el pas](#)

La Nueva España

[California elige entre un actor y un tecnócrata](#) Unión Radio

Who is Arnold Suarseneguer? (From Google News Spain in October 2003³.)

Google News BETA Search and browse 4,500 news s

Top Stories U.S. Go

Why does this page look this way?

New York Times - 56 minutes ago

It appears that your Web browser can not find this page's style and presentation information. You are welcome to use the page as is or, for the best experience, upgrade your browser to its latest version by ...

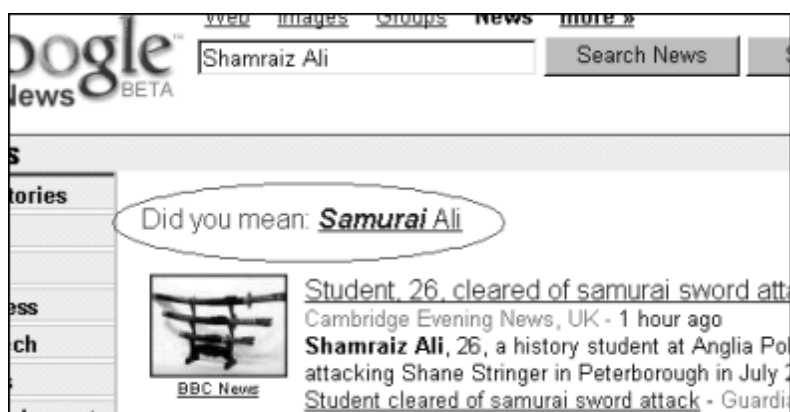
[Man shot by police was in wrong place at wrong time](#)

New Zealand Herald

[Innocent man was shot dead on train](#) Daily Telegraph

[Voice of America](#) - [BBC News](#) - [The Moscow Times](#) - [Globe and Mail](#) - [all 1,455 related »](#)

This interesting headline⁴ is the top news for Google in July, 2005!



"Did you mean: Samurai Ali?"



The photo next to the headline "Florida Keys to welcome tourists" shows a flooded area. Kenny⁵ says, "I'd wait for the water to go down first..."



[Citizen Valley](#)

Apple va équiper sa gamme Macintosh d

Reuters.fr - **Il y a 3 heures**
NEW YORK (Reuters) - Apple Computer devrait annoncer prochainement ses ordinateurs Macintosh de microprocesseurs Intel, rapidement...
[Apple abandonne IBM pour Intel](#) Nouvel Observateur
[Apple sur le point de dire oui à Intel](#) Silicon.fr
[Citizen Valley](#) - [LanGamers.ch](#) - [PC Impact](#) - [Echosd](#)



[Futura Sciences](#)

Vive les villes vertes !

Le Messenger - **Publié depuis 1 heure**
L'initiative de l'Organisation des Nations unies, la Journée mondiale de l'environnement, a insisté sur la nécessité d'améliorer la qualité de vie dans les villes...
[Améliorer l'environnement des villes, priorité pour l'ONU](#)
[Menace d'extinction de nos proches parents !](#) Futura
[All Africa](#) - [AngolaPress](#) - [et 9 articles connexes >>>](#)

Is it coincidence that Steve Jobs and the chimpanzee use similar gestures?⁶

ries

s


nment

Top Stories

U.S. Go

State breakdown suggests Bush

OSU Daily Barometer - 24 minutes ago
Today is the big day! I'm giddy with anticipation, and am doing all I can to control my bowels from leaking their repulsive contents.
[US fate rests in voters' hands](#)
The Globe and Mail (subscription)
[Bush, Kerry Face Voters Amid Heavy Turnout](#) Reuters
[Los Angeles Times \(subscription\)](#) - [MSNBC](#) - [Scotland on Sunday](#) -



[Access News](#)


A refreshingly personal view on today's news²...

Schlagzeilen

Deutscher und Niederländer in Irak getötet
NDR Online - vor 10 Stunden gefunden
Bei einem Anschlag im Irak sind zwei Mitarbeiter einer Bremer Pumpenbaufirma getötet worden. Das bestätigte ein Sprecher der Bremer Innenbehörde am Dienstag. Bei den Opfern handelt es sich um einen Deutschen und einen Niederländer. Nach Informationen ...


Ein Deutscher und e

This headline and snippet⁷ from Google News Germany suggest that a German has been killed in Iraq. Formula 1 driver Michael Schumacher shown to the right is German, but he's also alive.


BBC News

Google duo move up on Forbes' list
Times of India, India - 20 hours ago
NEW YORK: Google Inc's mammoth initial public offering has r
interesting side benefit - an entry into the upper echelons of Fort
Bill Gates keeps wealthiest crown ZDNet UK

Bill Gates is part of the Google duo?


Search and browse 4,500 news sources

Top Stories U.S. Go

Canadians Authorities Arrest US President Bush On War Charges
Axis of Logic - 3 hours ago
Canadian authorities have arrested US president George W. Bush in Ottawa. He has been charged with several offences under Canada's War Crimes Act.
[Bush Grateful for 'Five-Finger' Welcome](#) Kansas City Star (subscription)
[President Bush Pays Visit to Canada](#) Los Angeles Times (subscription)
[Reuters](#) - [Bloomberg](#) - [CJAD](#) - [CNN](#) - [all 984 related »](#)


China Daily

This was the actual Google top story on December 2004 when George Bush visited Canada (Google incidentally picked up a satire piece).

Google News BETA Search and browse 4,500 news sources up

Top Stories U.S. Go

Senate Reaches Compromise on Sexual Filibuster
Postcards from the Pug Bus (satire) - 1 hour ago
By Phil Maggitti. WASHINGTON - Last night fourteen members of the Senate agreed to an historic compromise on sexual filibustering that may have saved what one senator called "this august body" from ridicule and irreparable harm. ...
[Reid claims triumph: Ensign concerned about precedent](#) Las Vegas Review-Journal
[IT'S A COMPROMISE: SENATE ENDS IMPASSE](#) San Jose Mercury News
[OregonLive.com](#) - [Detroit Free Press](#) - [MarketWatch](#) - [Record-Searchlight \(subscription\)](#) - [all 1,893 related »](#)



Google News picks up satire, once more⁸...

World »

ABC News Attack on US Base in Mosul Kills 22
ABC News - 1 hour ago
BAGHDAD, Iraq Dec 21, 2004 - Rockets and mortar rounds struck a US base in the northern city of Mosul on Tuesday, killing at least 22 people and wounding 50, a Pentagon official said.
[Europe : Blair praises Iraqi election bravery in flying visit](#)
Keralanext
[Blair makes surprise Iraq trip](#) Reuters
[Bloomberg](#) - [WVLT](#) - [Xinhua](#) - [Zaman Online](#) - [all 481 related »](#)



Grant Shellen, who posted this screenshot⁹, says, "The importance of our punctual friend the colon is clearly evident here, when its absence makes it seem as though ABC News is getting a bit too aggressive in its coverage."

Virus In Horses

NBC4i.com - 12 hours ago

West Nile virus (WNV) is a viral disease previously seen only in Africa, Asia, and southern Europe. This virus can cause encephalitis, an infection of the brain and the spinal cord. The West Nile virus is ...

West Nile tentatively diagnosed in Washington, last of 48



KBTv4.tv

*Hmmm...the picture to the right reads "Hilton."*¹⁰

Scientists pack up: "Everything explained"

BBC News - 0.3 femtoseconds ago

Scientists all round the world today went home for a nice cup of tea after a revolutionary breakthrough explained everything. The new unified theory (NUT) unites science and religion, explains genetics, the origin of the universe, quantum phenomena, and provides the first instant cure for a hangover in human history.

Scientists: "It's very simple actually, very embarrassing" New Scientist
PC Pro - Mac Daily News - and 99 related »



BBC News

OK, this one is fake! It was created as part of the "Goodle" homepage¹¹ showing good news only.



I admit it, this one's fake too. It's Paul's completely personalized Google News circa 2005, covering nothing but... Paul himself.

Health »

SARS Claims Life Of Canadian Doctor
NBC 17.com - 30 minutes ago
TORONTO -- Although the epidemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome is officially over, another victim has died in Canada.
MD died trying to save others' from SARS Canada.com
SARS doc inspires two sons Calgary Sun
Toronto Star - WAVY-TV - Reuters - ABS CBN News - and 204 related »


Canada.com

8000 US doctors demand Canadian style health care
National Union of Public and General Employees - 2 hours ago
Washington - Nearly 8,000 American doctors, arguing that US health care is collapsing, have called for a national health insurance system similar to the one Canada has had for nearly 40 years.
Joe Crankshaw: All of a sudden, doctors warm to Clinton-style health care Street News


National Union of Public and General Employees

Sometimes, it's just the way two stories are composed side-by-side¹³ which gives new meaning not intended by either story.

End Notes

1. Via Stéfan Sinclair. (www.stefansinclair.name)
2. Via Craig S. Cottingham. (xcom2002.com/doh/)
3. Via Caspa.tv. (www.caspa.tv)
4. Via SecurityTribune. (securitytribune.com)
5. Via Kennry. (www.55fun.com/28.5)
6. Via Eric Lebeau. (zorgloob.com)
7. Via Dr. Web. (drweb.de)
8. Flickr. (www.55fun.com/28.8)
9. Via Grant Shellen. (www.55fun.com/28.9)
10. Via Jennifer. (jennifermonk.com/blog/)
11. Goodle. (www.55fun.com/28.11)
12. Aberson. (www.55fun.com/28.12)

29. Aliens Attack Google!

Do you wish to see a full-scale alien attack take place on the Google homepage? You can! In fact, not only does Netdisaster (www.netdisaster.com) allow you to destroy Google.com, you can destroy any other web page – in a multitude of ways, too. You can send meteors, flood it, nuke it, shoot it, paintball or chainsaw it, send God onto the page, cover it with flowers, or terrify it with a horde of flies, wasps, snails, worms and dinosaurs. If you're not the aggressive type, you can also just spill some coffee on the page instead...



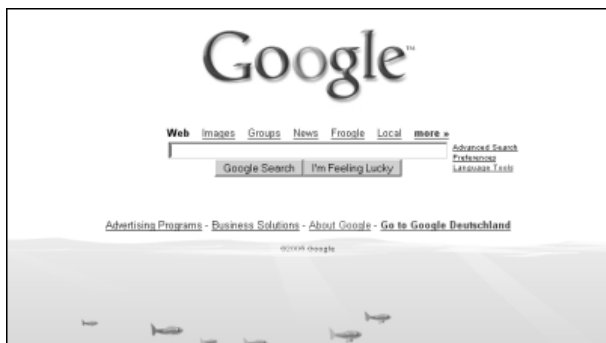
An alien laser burns semi-permanent holes into Google.com.

I asked creator Denis Rionnet from Lyon, France, how he got the idea for this tool. Denis tells me, “A few years ago, I started programming an online tool that allows users to turn any site into some African witch-doctor advertisement. ... So, people have fun with this tool and send the link to each other. But that's only for French speaking persons! So one year ago, I was wondering if I could find another idea of a tool that would interact with any site in a more visual way.”

Denis goes on to say that, after making sure his idea of weapons and plagues “destroying” any target site was technically possible, he worked hard on the site hoping people would enjoy it. And it did have an effect on people, but with some surprising results.

Not everybody understands how Netdisaster works; that basically, it's just a bunch of visual effects without actual consequences for the

target site. Some of the users wondered if they were staying anonymous during the attack, and also asked if the attacked site was harmed. Denis says, “Someone wrote to me once, because a site got out of order right after he had targeted it with Netdisaster – the server of this site was just down, coincidentally. He couldn’t believe that Netdisaster was not to blame at all, and urged me to do something about it!”



Google is currently being flooded... the fish at the bottom seem to enjoy it.



Meteors rain down on Google...

30. Top Ten Signs You Are Addicted to Google



10. Your kids still believe the Googlebot is bringing the Christmas presents.
9. When someone asks “How are you?” you mouse-click in mid-air at them and say “I’m feeling lucky.”
8. You shout at the librarian when she takes more than a tenth of a second to find your book.
7. You just lost a case in court to name your newborn son “Google.”
6. Google is your second-best friend... and you're thinking maybe it should be first.
5. Your Google shirt is losing color.
4. When people talk to you, you try to optimize their keywords.
3. Your last three Sunday family trips have been to the Googleplex.
2. You are convinced “What’s your PageRank?” is a good pick-up line.

And the number one sign you are addicted to Google:

1. You are completely clueless without a computer.

31. Dig a Hole Through Earth

"I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The antipathies, I think—" (she was rather glad there was no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word) "—but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand? Or Australia?" (and she tried to curtsy as she spoke—fancy, curtseying as you're falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?) "And what an ignorant little girl she'll think me for asking! No, it'll never do to ask: perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere."

— Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Have you ever wondered where you would end up if you dug a hole right through earth? Wonder no more (at least if you got an internet connection): Luís Felipe Cipriani from Brazil developed a website (www.55fun.com/31.1) based on Google Maps which lets you click on any starting point on the globe. A small info box pops up on which you can click "Dig here." Afterwards you discover the location you would come out at the other end.



I've asked my friend Justin Pfister (blog.justinpfister.com) if he knew some cool places to dig. Indeed, he did!

The only place to dig through the center of the Earth and land in China is the central west half of South America. The Upper half of Chile would be a great place to start.

What if Darwin explored downward by digging a giant hole in Galapagos? He'd end up off the coast of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean.

Does Stonehenge have an important location on the other side of the Earth? That depends how important you think the coast of New Zealand is.

What if everyone in the United States started digging huge holes? They would all end up in the Indian Ocean.

What if the people in Australia wanted to go "down under" too? They would all find themselves in the Northern Atlantic Ocean.

If the Lost City of Atlantis is still sinking through the center of the Earth, where might it come out? It would pop up in or around Australia. Could it be that Australia is the Lost City of Atlantis?

If Japan really starts to run out of space and begins building skyscrapers that go into the ground, they might eventually poke out near Brazil.

During the Cold War, if some people in Russia built some very deep bomb shelters, they would have ended up on the Southern Ocean near Antarctica.

What if the people in Iraq dig too deep into the Earth in search of oil? They will end up in the Pacific Ocean.

32. Googlebombing



A googlebomb is when a group of people get together trying to push a site up the Google rankings... a site which seemingly doesn't belong there. To do that, they all use the same link text when linking to the specific site – trying to make Google think the words in the link are indeed relevant to the page.

Probably the most well-known “Googlebomb” was for the phrase *miserable failure*. It would lead to the official biography of President George W. Bush on the White House servers. The effect is particularly convincing when you ask people to first enter *miserable failure*, and then press the “I’m feeling lucky” button; they will be referred to the top result directly, and some even thought Google expressed political beliefs here. Of course that’s not true – Google only created the algorithms that now run automatically, and from time to time, get abused to discredit people or organizations. Google’s only editorial decision in cases like these is to display small disclaimers close to googlebombed search results, and educate people on what’s happening. A reply posted to their official Google Blog¹ was:

We don’t condone the practice of googlebombing, or any other action that seeks to affect the integrity of our search results, but we’re also reluctant to alter our results by hand in order to prevent such items from showing up. Pranks like this may be distracting to some, but they don’t affect the overall quality of our search service, whose objectivity, as always, remains the core of our mission.

But the *failure* bomb against George Bush (which was quickly receiving a counter-googlebomb targeting director Michael Moore) wasn't the first one to appear on the search scene. Adam Mathes of the *Über* blog is credited with the invention of the Googlebomb. In his blog on April 6, 2001, he wrote:

Today, uber readers, you have a chance to make history.

Or at least legitimize some new jargon I'm about to make up.

Today's jargon of the day is:

GOOGLE BOMBING

Adam continued to explain the philosophy behind Googlebombs, which was backriding on the philosophy of Google itself:

In a bizarre surreal bow to the power of perception on the web, what you say about a page becomes just as important as the actual content of the page. The page must be what other people say it is. That Google adheres to this rule and is by far the most effective search engine raises many interesting issues, none of which I will attempt to discuss or explicate.


Now Google is smart, simply having tons of the same links with the same phrase on a single page will do nothing. It requires a multitude of pages to have that link with specific link text. But this power can be harnessed with a concentrated group effort.

Adam was only interested in pulling off a prank – a political agenda didn't have anything to do with it. So, he urged his readers to googlebomb his friend Andy Pressman with the words "talentless hack." And thus Googlebombs were born.

Of course, it didn't stop there. Not only did Googlebombs work, they were also becoming an effective tool in web propaganda.


"Weapons of mass destruction" was a Googlebomb criticizing the US Iraq politics. Because when you searched for this phrase in Google and hit the "I'm feeling lucky" button, the following page looked just like a

normal “Document not found” page. But if you were to look closely, you noticed it read:

 **These Weapons of Mass Destruction cannot be displayed**

The weapons you are looking for are currently unavailable. The country might be experiencing technical difficulties, or you may need to adjust your weapons inspectors mandate.

Please try the following:

- ◆ Click the  Regime change button, or try again later.
- ◆ If you are George Bush and typed the country's name in the address bar, make sure that it is spelled correctly. (IRAQ).
- ◆ To check your weapons inspector settings, click the **UN** menu, and then click **Weapons Inspector Options**. On the **Security Council** tab, click **Consensus**. The settings

(A similar approach had been used as target for the words “Arabian Gulf,” which returns a “The Gulf You Are Looking For Does Not Exist. Try Persian Gulf” message in the style of typical document-not-found pages.)

Yet another politically motivated Googlebomb was for “French military victories.” When you clicked “I’m feeling lucky,” the result page looked just like Google itself, and – mimicking the Google spelling suggestion tool – asked: “Did you mean: french military defeats.” (In similar vein, another Googlebomb for “anti-war peace protesters” suggested “Did you mean: anti-war *violent* protesters.”)

“Liar” was the word used in a Googlebomb against UK’s Prime Minister. Entering it into Google brought you to a biography of Tony Blair, who was also involved in the Iraq war and, like George Bush, believed the reports on Weapons of Mass Destruction were accurate. Tony Blair was also the target of a Googlebomb campaign trying to connect the word “poodle” to him (it was less successful, but if you restrict your search to UK sites only it might still return Blair’s homepage today).

Ken Jacobson’s “waffles” campaign was a Googlebomb against United States Senator and Presidential candidate in 2004, John Kerry, leading to his official homepage. In response to that, Kerry supporters bought

advertisements on related Google search results urging searchers to “read about President Bush’s Waffles.”

“Litigious bastards” was one of the more rude Googlebombs. Its target? The SCO Group, infamous for its attempt to sue companies like IBM and others who used Linux, as well as Linux users, and its claim to own intellectual property rights to the Unix operating system. As far as the campaign’s target goes, the Googlebomb was a success and managed to propel the SCO homepage to a number 1 spot for the phrase “litigious bastards.” As is the fate of many Googlebombs, this one has disappeared by now due to search result rankings undergoing constant changes.

“Buffone,” another Googlebomb, is Italian for “clown” and was trying to make fun of Silvio Berlusconi, Italian Prime minister.

Today, there are simply too many Googlebombs around at any given time to keep track of them all. Many people try to start new ones, and only some are successful. Others manage to connect their target to the search phrase they chose, but that isn’t always the hard part. In fact, for many search phrases it’s trivial to make any page to be the top result in Google; this is always the case when the phrase is not competitive. However, it’s not as easy to get people to react on the Googlebomb, let alone take notice. And even if people take notice, they might start to counter-googlebomb, which then turns this into a rather meaningless power game of which campaign attracts more followers to use link text as needed.

End Notes

1. The Google Blog. (www.55fun.com/32.1)
2. Über – Better than you, daily. (www.55fun.com/32.2)

33. Google Ads Gone Wrong

Google's ads are the way Google Inc makes money. They are displayed on Google search results, related Google services (like Gmail), or on any other site with a web owner trying to earn some spare change. (You can buy your own ads using "AdWords," or sell your page space using "AdSense.")

Now the key to Google's ad success was relevancy. Google analyzes what's on the page, or what the searcher is looking for, and automatically chooses a fitting advertisement.

And this is where the fun starts.

As with any automation, we can see how sometimes computers and the human-created algorithms they work on are incredibly dumb at deciding just *what fits* onto a given page... in particular on exceptional circumstances. Here's a slide-show of those exceptions:

The screenshot shows the homepage of SAYNOTO0870.COM, a site dedicated to non-geographical alternative telephone numbers. The site's main heading is "SAYNOTO0870.COM" with the subtitle "Non-Geographical Alternative Telephone Numbers". It mentions being awarded "Website Of The Day by BBC Radio 2" and featured on "The Guardian". Navigation links include Home, Discussion Forum, Links, and Help. A search bar is present with the text "Search to find an alternative number". A prominent advertisement for "Memorable 0870 Numbers" is circled, with a line pointing to a separate box below it that repeats the ad text. Another line points from the site's title to a box above it that reads "SAYNOTO0870.COM Non-Geographical Alternative Telephone Numbers". A "WELCOME" section at the bottom states, "Welcome to the SAYNOTO0870.COM website. The site lists many well known companies, and their equivalent geographical numbers."

SAYNOTO0870.COM
Non-Geographical Alternative Telephone Numbers

As awarded Website Of The Day by BBC Radio 2, and also featured on the BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine show and The Guardian.

Home Discussion Forum Links Help

Search to find an alternative number

click here to add a new alternative number

Memorable 0870 Numbers
at fantastically low prices. Huge selection available. Buy Online

Free 0870 Numbers
at fantastically low prices. Huge selection No setup, service or per min charge We even pay you up to 3.15p per min
Ads by Google

WELCOME
Welcome to the SAYNOTO0870.COM website
The site lists many well known companies, and their equivalent geographical numbers.

Memorable 0870 Numbers
at fantastically low prices. Huge selection available. Buy Online

The page clearly states "Say No To 0870 Telephone Numbers." And what did the Google ads on it decide to advertise? "Memorable 0870 numbers," and "Free 0870 numbers."

The screenshot shows a web page from 'The Register' with the headline 'Beagle 2 team none the wiser on failure'. The article is by Lucy Sherriff, dated Tuesday 24th August 2004. The text discusses the findings of the investigation into the fate of the European Mars lander. A sidebar on the right contains several links: 'Mars Rover Updates', 'Spirit and Mars Rovers', 'NASA Space Store', and 'Top 10 Rover insurers'. A circular callout highlights the 'Top 10 Rover insurers' link, which is an advertisement for 'insurance.shopping-finder.co.uk'.

Beagle 2 team none the wiser on failure

By Lucy Sherriff
Published Tuesday 24th August 2004 13:16 GMT

Beagle 2's operation team has published the findings of its investigation into the fate of the European Mars lander, broadly supporting the theory that the craft got into trouble in the Martian atmosphere.

However, the inquiry found that the technology largely worked as planned, and was unable to identify a single obvious point of failure. The investigation then focused on the elements of the mission that could have contributed to the craft's failure to make contact, and highlights a number of places where things might have gone wrong.

SPONSORED LINKS

Which? Report on Telescopes
Which? Online gives unbiased advice and information on a vast range of products and services. We have thousands of recent reviews and reports, helping you make informed decisions.

Quality Telescopes on Sale
We ensure the best quality of telescopes at the lowest prices. We ensure the best quality of telescopes at the lowest prices.

Top 10 Rover insurers
Compare Insurance on Rover's Get a quality quote from panel aff
insurance.shopping-finder.co.uk

NASA Space Store
The Space Store has NASA logo clothing, toys, patches & gifts.
www.thespacestore.com

Mars Rover Updates
The latest news on the mission of NASA's twin Mars Rovers
spaceflightnow.com

Spirit and Mars Rovers
Replicas, Toys and Images Mars Globes and More
www.spacelife.com

Atmosphere - eBay

Yes, why not just insure the Mars Rover? That way, if it gets lost the mission is still a success...

Farts

100,000 Stores. Deals. Reviews.

Farts & More!

Yahoo.com

The Yahoo shop has everything. Including farts reviews.

Sponsored Links

Are you called to be a
Catholic monk, nun, or priest?
Free online test. Free retreats too
vocationsplacement.org

Nuns
Nuns for sale. aff
Check out the deals now!
www.eBay.com

Pope John Paul II
Share your prayers for and thoughts
about this great servant of God.
www.benedictinesisters.org

Oh, eBay has everything too!?

Sponsored Links

Herbal Remedies
Herbal remedies and healthy teas
available at Dragonwater Tea.
dragonwater.com

Sexy Syphilitic Singles
Free photos, personals and hot
profiles of local singles. Free
www.infobert.com

Free eBay Success Kit
How I Earn \$277,000 a Year on eBay.
Get Your Free Kit - Today Only!
Easy-Money-at-Home.Info

Syphilitic singles³... hmm, there has to be a bigger fish out there...

mary !!!
I love you
come back
john

This is a "performance art" ad by Christophe Bruno (see Chapter 17).

\$50,000 for dead pets. (0.12 seconds)

Sponsored Links

Mini Super Soft Slicker
For Pets
Cats at The Ferret Store
www.ferretstore.com

Discount Dead Pets
New & used **Dead Pets**. aff
Check out the huge selection now!
www.eBay.com

Dead Pets
Compare prices on **Dead Pets**
Search over 200,000 stores!
Yahoo.com

Of course there's a discount. The pet is dead after all.

Ads by Goooooogle

View Cheating Partners
Married but need more excitement? Search for discreet partners online
www.ashleymadison.com

Top 10 Signs of a Cheat
Do you know what to look for when your lover, spouse, partner stray?
www.lie-detectors.com/

Extramarital Affair
Non-judgmental counseling over the phone. Affairs Happen, How to Cope.
www.Extramarital-Affairs.com

Healing After an Affair
Acclaimed pdf download for surviving an extramarital affair.
www.aftertheaffair.net

Google ads can be a one-stop life help center⁴. First, they aid you on cheating; then, they help your partner find out about it; and finally, they tell you how to cope with it once that happens!

Ads by Google

Israel in a Nutshell
Learn about Israel-Palestine in a Nutshell. Books available.
www.enisen.com

Gaza Strip Singles
Meet Your Perfect Match! and Stay Connected.
gdconnect.net/dating

Jerusalem Israel Sale
New & used Jerusalem Israel. aff Check out the deals now!
www.eBay.com

What's that...?

Sponsored Links

Kryptonite
Huge selection
Low prices guaranteed!
www.ridegear.com
Interest:

Kryptonite
Find the best deal! Compare prices
on all products from across the web
www.mysimon.com
Interest:

This might come in handy when Superman's around.

End Notes

1. Xcom 2002. (xcom2002.com/doh/)
2. Colleen Kane. (www.55fun.com/33.2)
3. Harlow. (acsu.buffalo.edu/~harlow/)
4. BrainWise. (brainwise.org)
5. Zman Biur. (biurchametz.blogspot.com)
6. Matt's Mac Journal. (friends.macjournals.com/matttd/)

34. Life in the Age of Google





